the PARIS REVIEW

13

DOROTHY PARKER
an interview

Letters from an American Prisoner

Nadine Gordimer

drawings by
ANITA DE CARO

Jean Genet

Robert Pack

Short Stories

Poetry

SUMMER 1956
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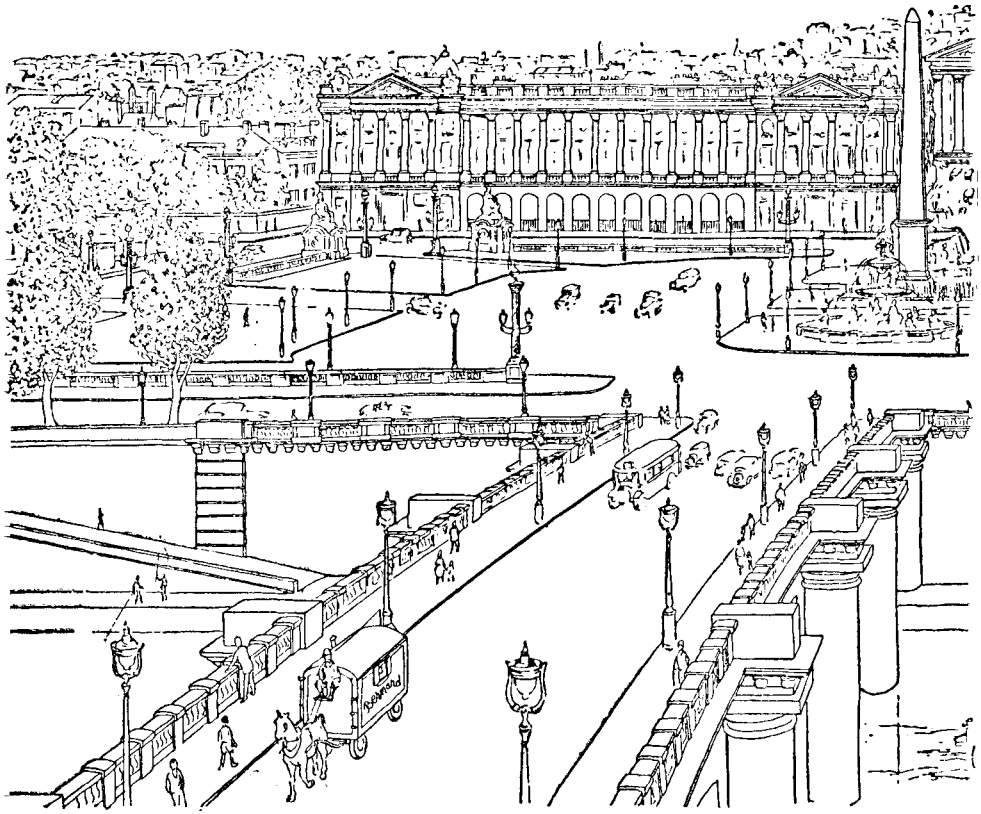

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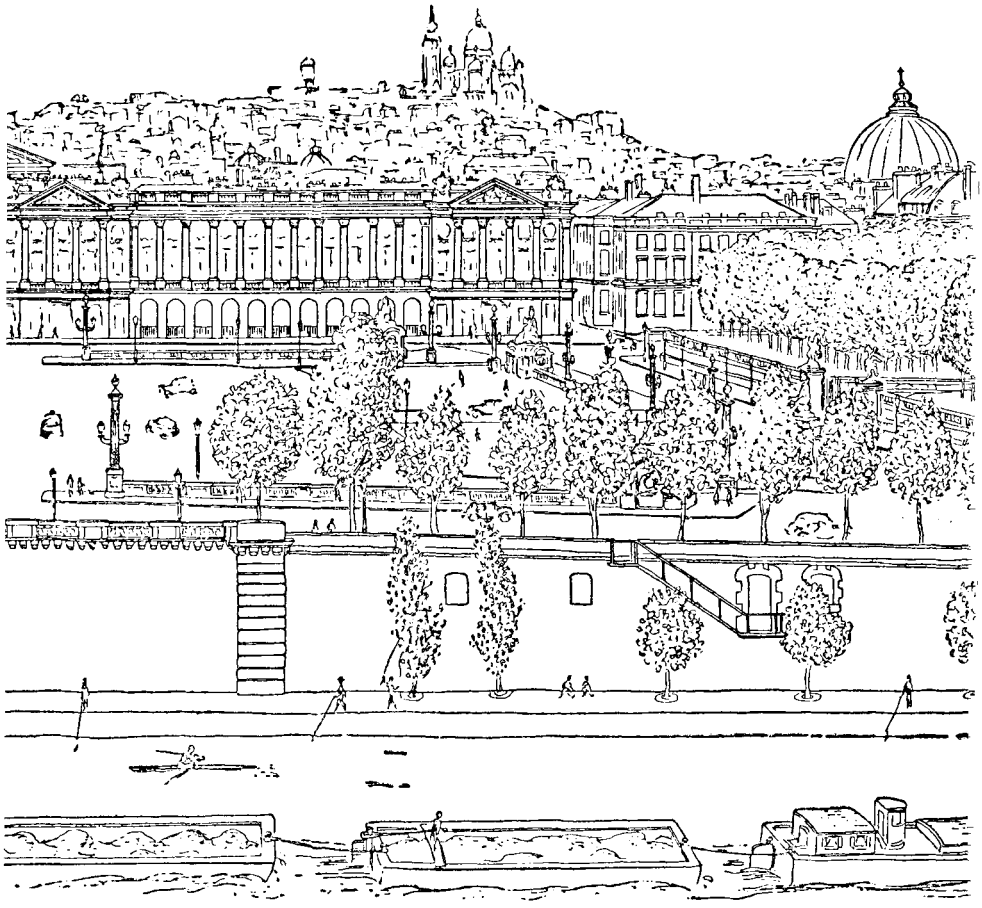

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TWO PRISON

I

LETTERS FROM AN AMERICAN PRISONER

These letters were written during the period September 20, 1950—May 20, 1952, while James Blake, a night club pianist by profession,

FEB. 25, 1951

Dear Bud:

Thanks for your note and the enclosed dollar. It couldn't have come at a better time, at the end of a long week of diggin' and dyin'.

I'm doing two years altogether here, two six-months sentences on counts of petit larceny, and a one-year sentence for breaking and entering.

As far as my fall is concerned, the only mistake I made was one of judgment in choosing a partner for my small depredations—we did some boosting together and everything was cool, until he got drunk and was picked up for prowling cars.

Then he was seized with an attack of compulsive garrulity and voluntarily directed them straight to me. I copped out on the larceny charges, figuring to get six months at the most, but they sprang a breaking and entering rap that I knew nothing about. What happened, Don H. got drunk and went on the prowl again, but in the boarding house where we were staying. How about that? My presence on the burglarized

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CHRONICLES

BY JAMES BLAKE

was a convict in a southern county jail. The Mr. X to whom a number of the letters are addressed is a well-known American author.

premises was established, and that was enough to get me a year.

Briefly, my fall partner was a southerner, with a brother on the force, and I was a Yankee ripe for burning. I got two years, he got six months.

I've been here since last September 20, and it's rugged back-breaking labor on the bull gang. We work out on the road under three shotgun guards. On the occasions when I simply wasn't able to keep up, and tired of trying, I was sent to the Box, a solitary cell, high and narrow ($3 \times 8 \times 8$) with no window or bed and a tin can for sanitation. Five slices of bread a day and all the water you want. At first it just made me mad, but now I'll admit I'm scared of it. As a result I spend most of the time in a haze of anxiety, trying to work hard enough to please the head-guard, Piggy, a fat sadistic Georgia cracker, real high-type Southern gent.

All of it has got my nerves to a dangerous point, and I must get away. It's been done by a lot of prisoners, running right out from under the gun. It isn't as hard as it might seem, because one of the guards will grease for twenty-five bucks. Once over the line, only about twenty miles away, there's

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no serious pursuit, because the County is too broke to finance sending after anyone any distance. So I'm trying to raise the loot and just waiting.

Incoming mail is not opened at all, and it's easy to kite a letter out, as I'm doing with this. We're allowed to receive just about anything except firearms, so if you have a white T-shirt and a pair of old tennis sneakers, I could use them, not only for working in, but they'll be handy when I hang it up. Stamps and envelopes are hard to come by here too, and writing and receiving mail is really the only thing to look forward to.

What I do need though, to help me hold on to my fading wits, is a radio. Being without music is like being deprived of light and air, it is as though all the color and shape and meaning have gone out of my life. Please, Bud, if you can get hold of any kind of beat-up little radio, send it along.

Anything you do, any loot you can send will be repaid—I've got a little over 300 bucks stashed in a safe place neaeby, the remains of the proceeds from a gas station we pilfered before we fell. I guess the only reason my voluble chum failed to spill his guts about that was the faint hope that he'll be able to lay hands on it when he gets out, but it's safe enough, the poor child.

Well that is the whole loused-up deal, and the only good, if it is that, to come out of it is that I now have muscles in my eyebrows and all elsewhere.

And that somewhere along the line in all this tohu-bohu I've come of age. And am I bitter? Bébé! Yours, B.

P.S. There is another and better way to hang it up, which is to have a car pick me up on the road where the crew is working. I've looked at it from all angles, and it's practically foolproof, since the guards aren't allowed to fire at a moving vehicle. So if you have a taste for a little B-movie action, let me know. Seriously, Bud, I know it's too much to ask but Jesus, I godda get odda here.

P.P.S. When you get this, please send me a postcard—just checking on the mail connection.

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MAR. 4, 1951.

Dear Bud:

Many thanks for your note and the enclosed buck; I was able to purchase some tobacco to supplement the weekly ration of yak dung they issue here.

For good behaviour I get a big four months out of two years, leaving twenty months. As for parole, nobody within memory has ever made it out of here by that route. County needs the free labor, man.

I have carefully considered all the ways of hanging it up, believe me, and the simplest easiest way is to be picked up by a car. The crew is in the same spot every day to fill the water barrels for the road—from there it is simple to follow the truck until it arrives at the work location for the day, and await the proper opportunity.

As I explained, the next easiest way is to grease one of the guards. He's a young guy and under no suspicion of accepting bribes. When all the conditions are right, he'll take twenty-five bucks and give you about ten minutes before sounding an alarm.

Even the hardest way, running right out from under the gun—after you have maneuvered so that you have a good distance between yourself and the guard, and his back is turned—is workable. In the past three months three guys have done it, but even that entails a certain amount of cash for buying clothes in town, and taxi fare into town. (Nobody has ever been turned in by a cab driver).

Having very little else to think about, I have worked out detailed plans along each of these lines, too involved to be explained here, but I'm sure they would be successful. If not, I would probably get from six months to a year additional, wear the chains for sixty to ninety days, and try again.

You advise checking these plans against reality, which I assume means calculating my chances of success. In an existence of days of heart-tearing labor and nights of dreary bestiality, any chance is worth taking. I'm just trying to get the best odds I can and a little wherewithal will supply that—I don't mean from you, Bud; if you're having it rough I'm

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damned sorry to hear it, you were so great to me, and I was pretty much chicken-shit—but I'll get it somehow.

I'm going into a solitary cell at my own request sometime this week, to put an end to that part of my troubles that stems from my fellow-inmates and aberrant sex run wild—so I sincerely hope you will find it possible to send a radio. I can't possibly convey how hungry I am for music, how starved for it, and I know it would do so much to fill this horrible gray emptiness, and to relieve this tension, this anxiety—

When, I shall have to resort to the ultimate refuge of the inarticulate—it stinks! Yours, B.

MAR. 18, 1951.

Dear Bud:

Well, my best-laid plan has gang agley—The Man, in some mysterious way, got information that three of us were planning to run, and I have been transferred to another work crew, and haven't been out from under the gun since I joined it. That does not necessarily mean that all is lost, but it will be some time till I can sniff my way to another crack. I'll keep you informed.

The transfer has one good angle to it, the work is lighter. Now instead of laboring like an ox, I have merely to work like a mule...

Certainly I wish there was some way of your getting that stash for me. It's hidden in the room I occupied in a boarding-house, in a place that only the dismantling of the building would reveal, and getting it out will be more or less ticklish if the room is occupied, comparatively simple if it's vacant. I had planned to get next to the colored maid there, who's pretty hip, but not hip enough to be fly, if you know what I mean. If you want to make a stab at it, you can come here first (visiting hours on Sunday 3–5), and I'll tell you exactly where to look.

Merci mille fois for the buck, it's more than ever welcome now that I'm living in solitary—being away from my mentor, the Muskie, and all that sex hassle, has done wonders for my

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peace of mind and serenity, but it has also put me completely on my own resources. So if you can throw in some stamps when you send that T-shirt, I shall be glad to knock off a filling station in your honor, come The Day.

I hope fervently that you can do something about the radio—Last night I had the Polovtzian Dances from Prince Igor running through my mind, and would have given anything to hear it—before that it was Mary Martin singing "Cockeyed Optimist"—and it goes on all the time. Please do what you can, and thanks again. I hope you'll decide to make the trip up here. Yours, B.

MAR. 25, 1951.

Dear Bud:

Psychologists may be right about the small percentage of junkies that are really hooked, but every case that I have personal knowledge of seems to indicate the opposite. In Lisa's case, the ravages produced by an insufficient supply of the drug were not only mental, but excruciatingly and plainly physical. However, perhaps the book should be recommended to her. I know that she is still hot on the trail of the elusive and ephemeral fix.

From the way things look at present, the heat is really on as far as hanging this up is concerned. Both the guards on the crew are young and discouragingly agile, but I am still seeking the chink of venality in their armor. Patience is indicated, ulzo fortitude.

You do not mention going to the boardinghouse, for which I do not blame you. I can understand your reluctance to become involved in this road-company cops n' robbers opus. With the weasel-cunning and hardihood this hassle has given me, I shall yet confound these chinchy rascals, if I can only get a little temporary backing from you.

Thanks for the Yankee dollah, it gets me through the week in pretty good shape. I regret that for the moment I can only reiterate pale gratitude. And many thanks for the package, I shall be looking for it. Yours, B.

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APRIL 1, 1951.

Dear Bud:

The regimen of unendurable boredom indefinitely prolonged continues in force. If all the digging I have done in the past week could have been devoted to the excavation of a tunnel, I would now be somewhere under Paterson, N.J. The hope of hanging it up is rather dim at present, the new guard follows me about with a truly touching single-minded devotion. I attempt to make a friend of him, but I am singularly inept at that sort of thing, and my overtures sound false and hollow to my own ears. However, I have discovered that he has three kids, one an invalid, and is nearly always in financial straits, which may make him somewhat vulnerable—but I shall have to wait a bit.

My cozy solitary cell was needed for the quarantine of new prisoners, so I am once more back in the dormitory, and plunged even deeper into the joyless overblown sex charade from which I fled—Lord, I will be a demon ascetic when I can extricate myself from this hassle!

All this suffering would undoubtedly be salutary for my Art, if I had an Art, but I am afraid that the tiny pianistic talent I possess is more of a monkey-trick than a Sacred Flame. My problem is how to adapt all this noble suffering to a more sparkling piano rendition of "My Baby's Boobies" or "The You Don't Know the Half of It Dearie Blues." Assuredly too great a heat for such a picayune pie.

I cannot adequately express my disappointment about the radio—I ran across something in Flaubert that seems apropos of all my struggles to say what I mean—"Human speech is the tin kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance, when we would move the moon." Or T. S. Eliot's, "Oh the agonizing struggle with words and meanings!" Mutely yours, B.

APRIL 4, 1951.

Dear Bud:

There has been a sudden change in the shotgun guards on our crew, and one of the replacements is the young guy who

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was on the bull gang when I was with it, the venal one who does the little traffic in abetting escapes for a two-bit consideration.

The story is that the guards are going to be switched around every two weeks, apparently to discourage fraternizing with the prisoners. So I have two weeks to hang it up in, the easy way and the best, or else run from under the gun and risk what the boys call a "Rash in the ass," or worse.

I had a chance for a word with him today, and the deal is still hot. Another prisoner, a kid from California, has agreed to run at the same time, but in the opposite direction, to complicate pursuit somewhat...

I have a place ready in town where I can hide out and get clothes, and lay low until I can get to that loot I've got stashed. From there I'll go to Rose's in Atlanta, and buy there what I'll need for the trip north.

Can you swing it, Bud? I hate like blazes to impose, more than I could tell, but it will only be a temporary thing, a week at most, and I shall be forever in your debt, even when the gold is repaid. I've got to get out of this blasted deadfall. The way I feel now, I can wallop the world, and I want to get away before jailhouse apathy makes me no goddam good for anything.

Many thanks again for the buck, Bud. And now, sweet Jesus willing, let's see if we can't get me off your back and on my feet again. Je meurs, Armand, je meurs! Yours, B.

APRIL 15, 1951.

Dear Bud:

Still watching for my opportunity to take off, waiting until the heat is off a little. This Spring weather has set off a rash of plans on all sides to hang it up—two prisoners from the other work gang tried to run, were caught that same night, and are now wearing chains. The sight of those has made me doubly cautious, but the moment will come.

My "protector", Joey D., the Muskie, is greatly exercised at my plans to leave—there was no way of keeping my

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receipt of the money from him, since we bunk together, and could not be more intimate if we were inside the same skin. He threatens intermittently to take the money away from me, but as yet has done nothing but twist my arms and pummel me some, which I am accustomed to as all a part of the impossible game I have been forced into playing here.

We also have a group of prisoners called "creeps" or "night-crawlers," who prowl the dormitory at night and steal from the other sleeping prisoners. To report these unsavoury and totally lost creatures is of course a violation of the rigid convict code, and is called "ratting" or "cheese-eating". Lord, what a beautiful warped bewildered pack of troglodytes. I try to preserve a philosophical attitude towards it all, lest I be provoked into making an incautious move, but the position at times is somewhat untenable.

I hope you will forgive my temerity in asking for the white T-shirt, but it really is a necessary part of the plan, and I have no other way of getting one.

Glad to hear that you were able to ransom your typewriter, and wish I had one too, so I could spare you the eyestrain of deciphering my lurching hand.

P.S. Has that fugitive fall-partner of mine shown his face? He hung it up a couple of days ago you know, and may head for Miami, since his mother lives there. I thought it best to warn you to have no truck with him, he's pure poison.

Yours, B.

MAY 2, 1951.

Dear Bud:

It's damned annoying and frustrating as hell to write letters and then have them go astray. I presume that's what has happened again, since I haven't had any answer to my last one. I'm quite sure I shall be able to get this one out.

I'm still trying to tell you how grateful I am for your intercession with X. I hope that some day I shall be able in

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some way to repay that enormous kindness. And I'm still awaiting my opportunity and trying to possess my soul in patience. However, I am still in need of a white T-shirt to wear in place of the prison shirt when I take off. It isn't just an idle whim, but a very necessary part of the operation, and I can't obtain one except by having one sent through the mail.

The loot you sent I have deposited with the house-man of the prison dormitory, a trustworthy elderly prisoner from Miami, who has been a good friend to me. It will be safe with him until I need it. I have convinced Joey (the Muskie) that I have changed my mind about running, so things have quieted down somewhat in that direction. He objected strenuously, and is psycho enough to foul me up in some way, so I had to forestall that.

I'm trying to raise enough dough now to finance my trip north. Not from you, I hasten to say, but from some of my erstwhile friends in Chicago. I shall have to hitch-hike most of the way, I suppose, but I should like to get out of the chain-gang territory before I attempt it. I've heard a lot of reports from prisoners telling of the rugged chain gang sentences they've pulled for hitch-hiking and vagrancy, all the way up the coast to D.C., and I don't want to make a Dixie Odd-ysey out of this thing.

And if you can possibly make it on your way north, please stop by for a visit. I shall probably saturate you with salt tears of gratitude, and may not be able to refrain from licking your hand, but I long to see a face from the outside world and to hear an intelligent word.

Let me hear as soon as you get this, so I shall know if the mail gimmick is in working order. It has been in sad disrepair.

Yours, B.

P.S. Please forgive this rather incoherent scrawl. The strain of all this waiting and hoping has me a trifle distrait.

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MAY 7, 1951.

Dear Bud:

The small sadness and resignation in your letter quite touched and distressed me, truly, and for a little I was able to forget my own horrid and disorderly situation in realizing the dissatisfactions and frustrations of another—Really, my engulfing egocentricity makes me all but blind and deaf at times...

It's wonderful of you to visit Lisa; the poor child is desolate—but I am in the hands of these cannibalistic Crackers, my pillow is wet, and the night wind carries my keening...

It is Monday night now, and I'm going to try to get this out tomorrow. I shall have to perpetrate some small swindle for an envelope and a stamp, or perhaps bestow my bedraggled favour on some prison-type gent. (Flahrs, kep'n, buy some flahrs from a paw gel?...). Yours, B.

MAY 13, 1951.

Dear Bud:

If you really want to take the trouble of beating the drum and waving the suggestive tambourine in my behalf in Chicago, you could get in touch with J.G., Mercantile Exchange. He is so disenchanted with me that I dunno, but perhaps if you tell him you saw me chained in the stocks in the colored bordello section of Jax, bleeding from the eyes...

I shall write Lisa a buck-up note, although it will probably have a strange and hollow sound, issuing as it were de profundis. Something like Jack the Baptist urging Salome to get with it. But give her my love undying when you see her—a babe incomparable and indestructible...

You ask who the Muskie is. I thought I made that clear. He is simply the brass-brained, muscle-bound Golden Boy who appointed himself my jailhouse Daddy-o. Between beatings and brainings he implores me not to take off. The situation is untenable, boring to desperation, and dull dull dull... Yours, B.

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Addendum, MAY 15, 1951.

As you can see from the date, I've held this letter until I could find a way of getting it out. It will be mailed tomorrow night, all being well, and you should receive it Friday.

Received the package from X. containing the shirt and envelopes and the fin—Damn, but it brings me alive again to see a way opening up out of this mess! It may be a few days before I can get a letter out to X., so please assure him that everything reached me all right, and that his kindness shall not be in vain. A bas les Dixiecrats!

Now for the information you requested on the details of my commitment. The judge was substituting for the regular judge, who was ill. I received two six-month sentences on two counts of larceny, and a one-year sentence for breaking and entering. On the advice of court attaches, I plead guilty to all counts. (Though I imagine it will make very little difference now, I was and am entirely innocent of the breaking and entering charge.) My record here, as far as I know, is good, since it has never occurred to me to do anything that would bring down on me the rather dire punishment reserved for recalcitrants.

As for my involvment with the Muskie here, there was never any question of choice for me. Considerable duress was brought to bear, and I was simply forced to comply wit' his wishes. But though I am helpless physically, I can and do describe some fantastic circle around the beast forensically, and I have him pretty well snowed into believing that I won't leave him.

There is a jailhouse rumor that because of the overcrowded condition of the state pen, they are going to start shipping in some longtermers here. That would mean considerably-tightened restrictions and increased vigilance. It may not be true, but if it is, I shall have to get the hell out before it happens.

Your new pad in Chicago sounds interesting. A good trip, Bud, happy orientation, and please write soon.

Yours, B.

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MAY 20, 1951.

Dear Mr. X.:

This is to thank you for the T-shirt and envelopes and your contribution towards the success of my small plot. My plans have had still another slight setback because one of the trusties here last night took off for the altogether elsewhere, the joint is jumping, and vigilance is the order.

Your kindness is doubly appreciated in view of the fact that I am a comparative stranger to you. We met once while I was playing piano in the Pink Poodle on State Street in Chicago. It was in Dugan's Bar, I think, and I made some snide remark about an author collecting color. That was my snide period, a prolonged one. Very oatish I was, but the stupidity of the remark was its own handy obituary.

As an author, it might amuse you, or it might leave you somewhat shaken, to learn the method by which the excellence of a book is judged in the chain gang. The method is simple, brusque, direct—One query only: "Is there any fuckin' in it?" When I think of all the polished painstaking book reviews I've read ("Luminous imagery"—Toronto Star) ("Mordant satire"—Boston Globe) I wonder, is all.

Best wishes for your continued success, and hoping I may be able to thank you personally, once I get through the Union lines. Yours, B.

JUNE 21, 1915.

Dear Bud:

Well, I tried to hang it up and with my usual flair, I stepped on my dick. It's a long story, but as long as you and X. and Jack financed it, I figure you're entitled to know what happened.

I had it all set with the guard. I gave him the loot, twenty-five, and he said he'd give me ten minutes whenever I decided to go.

I didn't get a chance till after lunch—everything fell right and I took off through the swamp, crashing through those goddam palmettos like a water buffalo. All of a sudden I

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heard a shot, then another. I thought the bastard was crossing me up and I really began to run. Then I heard somebody crashing through the brush behind me, coming fast. I looked around and saw Joey, the Muskie. Jesus, I could have shit, but we kept right on running, and in a way I was glad of the company though I was afraid of getting loused up.

We stopped to listen, and heard somebody coming not too far back. Joey said we'd have to hole up and wait till dark. We crawled far under a spreading palmetto and lay flat. Joey had a thick length of pine branch and when I asked him what for, he said if the motherin' screw ever caught up to us, he'd wish he hadn't. Oh fine.

We heard the guy coming, crashing through the swamp (we must have left a trail a mile wide). And damned if he didn't stop right where we were hiding, with his back to us—It was the guard I greased. Before I knew anything, Joey jumped out and hit him an awful clout alongside the ear with the club, and he went down like a pole-axed ox.

We ran until we couldn't run any further, finally flopped down in the middle of a prairie of shoulder-high grass, it must have been about a mile square. We decided to wait there for darkness, when we could get to the Seaboard tracks.

Then he started upbraiding me for running, said I was just trying to get away from him, and other denunciations. I pointed out to him that he and his shillelah had put the heat on but good and fucked me up for fair. He hauled off and just about beat my brains out. I'll spare you the rest of that sun-baked nightmare in the afternoon, but if ever I wake up screaming (or laughing wildly) I'll be thinking of that. Erotic dalliance on the veldt, with all those half-witted crackers looking for us and that guard lying back there. The man's insane.

After dark, we made it to the Seaboard tracks. We waited at the top of a long grade, where Joey said all the freights had to slow down to make the hill. It must have been hours we lay in the bushes, but a freight finally came along and we grabbed an empty gravel car and crouched down in the

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corner out of the wind. That damn thing made about eighty stops, and it was daylight when we jumped off outside Wincross. Another guy dropped off with us, and Joey asked him about getting a train out, and he said there was a freight going to Atlanta that night at nine.

We waited in the woods for the stores to open, and I went into town to buy some clothes. Man, I felt about ten feet high, but I found an Army store and got blue jeans and T-shirts for both of us. (The one I had on was torn and muddy, I was a mess, but the old Jew who ran the joint didn't even look at me. Blessed are the incurious).

I bought a few groceries and some cheap wine (I needed a drink awful bad). We stayed in the woods all day, and even managed to have a kind of furtive picnic, the wine, of course. And I guess I was light-headed with panic too.

We went into the yards just about dark. There was nobody around but a bo who pointed out the freight for us, and we climbed into a box-car and lay down flat in the corner. We'd been awake for so damn long and were so exhausted that we both went right to sleep. I was awakened by somebody kicking me, holding a flashlight in my eyes, telling me to get the hell up out of there. Georgia fuzz. They handcuffed us together, and when Joey said "what the hell," one of them said, "You're the half-bad mother-fuckers that killed that guard over in Jetts County." For me, everything stopped—but Joey said we'd just finished working in Ocala and had a job in Atlanta we were going to. They guy said he had us for trespassing anyway, and took us in.

They had us cold, of course. One of the young deputies told me that the guard wasn't dead, but had concussion and shock. That helped some, believe me.

It all moved pretty fast—they took us back to the County jail and we were tried and sentenced in three days—but before we were tried, they took Joey out of the cell one night and brought him back horribly beaten up. Man it was awful, I cried over it.

Joey absolved me of all blame in the assault on the guard, and got a year in the State Pen. I got six months for running

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and shackles for my ankles. Being fitted for chains is an experience.

Now I'm back where I started, and Joey's gone. Well, nothing is forever. We shall see. Ever, B.

JULY 15, 1951.

Dear Mr. X.:

Lack of writing material has delayed me from writing sooner to thank you for your really overwhelming and thoughtful gift of all those *New Yorker* magazines. They have afforded me a wonderful escape from the drabness and dreariness of my present surroundings. The half-zany, half-rueful editorial attitude of the magazine has always been a tonic to me, and in my present plight it is more than ever reassuring somehow, to know that such an attitude exists.

I have made a brief and abortive bid for freedom, which was considerably complicated by too many people getting into the act. Everything would have gone according to plan had I not been suddenly joined by a fellow-prisoner who decided, for reasons too devious to untangle, to go along with me unannounced. In the ensuing melee, a guard was bashed on the head with a club and left unconscious, thereby generating a good deal of heat all around. We were caught in Wincross, Ga., on a freight train bound for Atlanta, and returned.

My fellow-fugitive absolved me of all blame in the attack on the guard and was sent to the state pen for a year, while I was returned here with an additional six months and chains around my ankles.

I am now being kept in solitary for a period, which is no great hardship, since I am better able to read without distractions and am excused from participation in the intramural sex games of the dormitory.

One thing I miss terribly here is the opportunity to hear any music, and if anybody up there has an old radio they are not using, I would be endlessly grateful for it. Since the advent of the newest American brain-killer, TV, I understand

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that everybody goes around in a permanently stunned state of television-torpor, and radios are very little used. I know now that I shall have to build this time, and a little nachtmusik would add color to an existence that is predominantly gray.

Thank you again for that amazing box of riches.

Sincerely, B.

AUGUST 1, 1951.

Dear Mr. X.:

I don't know what to say—I am completely absolutely awe-struck at your understanding, compassion and generosity.

The radio you sent, and the opportunity to hear some music again that it affords me, have given color and depth to an existence that had become a flat and deadly gray.

If that seems lush and fulsome, it is nonetheless true.

My blessing, worn and dubious though it be, goes out to you, and I hope that when I get out of this I may be able to show you in some concrete fashion my deep and sincere gratitude.

And so, I must take up once again the burden of faith in humanity. Sincerely, B.

AUGUST 18, 1951.

Dear Bud:

Sorry to hear about your mother's illness and hope that she will be completely recovered soon. I had been looking for a letter from the usual spot and was surprised by the St. Louis postmark. Have you been down this way at all yet? Over the Labor Day weekend I looked for a visit from you, in fact I still have striped indentations down my face from pressing against and peering through the bars for three days, staring staring staring. On the wet pillow, the damp and shredded handkerchiefs, I draw the curtain...

The radio that X. sent has made a world of difference to me here, and has been most helpful in fighting off the engulfing

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monotony of this existence. I hope I shall have an opportunity to know X. better when I get out of here, and a chance to show how I feel about such wonderful kindness...

I think I may get the shackles cut off some time this week. In this matter, I have two powerful partisans in the persons of two nice old ladies who conduct a Bible class every Saturday at the joint. I attended the first class out of a cynical curiosity to see what the enemy was doing, but I was so charmed by their sweetness and earnestness that I became a regular member. Now they are everlastingly at the warden to take my chains off, and it is as good as having the furies on my side. I expect some action soon, since the Baptists pull a pow'ful lot of weight in these hyuh parts. We shall see.

Yours, B.

SEPT. 23, 1951.

Dear Mr. X.:

...The radio continues to be a pleasure and a blessing in the arid monotony of these days. I've become quite a connoisseur in private-eye melodramas, almost to the point where I can tell one from another. Speaking of crime broadcasts, when I was living up in the prison dormitory it was forever fascinating to watch the cons listening to Gang-Busters. Everything was eerily hindside-to, with the prisoners judiciously approving the account of a bank robbery, holdup, or some others violence to the statutes, ruefully cursing the triumphant arrival of the law. When it was over they would go to bed pointing out the mistakes of their fellow malefactors and bemoaning their stupidity. It always left me bemused.

Yours, B.

OCT. 28, 1951.

Dear Bud:

...A voice has come out of the recent past to present me with a problem this week. A former prisoner here, with whom I had some quietly ferocious amorous dealings, has

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written me from a Kentucky prison, where he is doing a year, that he intends to come down here to meet me when I get out. He is flamboyantly attractive, and the prospect of one last wild ride on the tiger is tempting to my as yet unweaned mentality. At the same time I feel that I should bank the fires and settle down quietly to cope with the menopause.

My status here has become that of a semi-trusty, I still go out with the work-gang, but I am occasionally sent off alone to do jobs out from under the gun. So I have plenty of opportunity to take off, but lack the wherewithal. Or perhaps I have now become like the caged animal who fears to leave the cage even when the door is opened. But I guess it's just that I don't feel like doing it the hard way. Ever, B.

NOV. 20, 1951.

Dear X.:

Thank you very much for the welcome deuce, the stamps and the postcards. Loot is pretty hard to come by here for those who don't have visitors, and they resort to a variety of means to raise it, one of the most popular the lifting of it from one another...

Another institution that has filtered through the bars is the caste system. ("All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.")

At the top are those who are alumni of the state pen. The other inmates regard these eminences much as a Lawrenceville boy might look at a Princeton man.

The gradations continue all down the line to the "winoes", chronic drunkards who are regarded frostily as 30-day interlopers and not true criminals at all. Maybe the winoes are disconsolate with nobody to look down upon, or maybe they just settle contented and cozy at the bottom.

I cannot tell—the light is rather dim down there.

The Indoor Ward McAllister, B.

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DEC. 2, 1951.

Dear Bud:

...Those are rather probing questions you ask about the penal set-up down here. Are you thinking of tinkering with the statutes? Here's the story– the County does not have a stockade in town for white prisoners, since the resort owners objected to prisoners, many of them in chains, working exposed to the public, or tourist, view. Such delicacy does not extend to our brown brothers, who do county road work down there. Any white who is sentenced up to a period of one year usually makes the time in the city jug. Over one year, he goes to Raxley. There, if he is under thirty-five and in good physical condition he is eagerly embraced by the State Road Dept., and sent to one of the many camps throughout the state. Most of these camps are rugged beyond imagining. I know that the state gangs we pass at work on the road have a somber lowering aspect, "dead to rapture and despair," and I always feel a faint chill at the sight of them. When I was held in the Bliss County jail, a Raxley gang was quartered temporarily in an adjacent cell block, and when they came off the road at night, they sounded like nothing so much as wild beasts.

Certainly, from the cons point of view it is better to go out every day and do hard manual labor, even in the broiling sun, than it is to stay cooped up for days on end. Preserves your morale, puts you in top physical condition, and leaves you fit for better and bigger depredations upon release. I know that when I get out I shall be full of such an incandescence and rage to live that I shall probably kick a hole in someboy if I am not able to channel my energies properly.

This prison farm is purely a county affair, for offenders with sentences up to three or four years, and while some of the work we do is as tough as anything they get in the Raxley camps, the hours, food, treatment are immeasurably better. This joint is considered a model county stockade. And now that I have become accustomed to the road work, it is only the grinding monotony of the days that make it in any way though. And of course, no TV. Ever, B.

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DEC. 9, 1951.

Dear X.:

This week I finished a book that Jack O. sent me, Elizabeth Bowen's *Heat of the Day*, and for a couple of days, impressionable ass that I am, I was clipped in my speech and moodily English. That kind of performance needs a discerning audience, though, and if my colleagues noticed it at all, it was to give me a brief, dimly suspicious glance and dismiss the matter, the way a cow does when she looks at you.

—My work out on the road has brought me into contact with quite a number of cows lately, and I've never seen anything to beat the way they can convey quiet contempt. It may be that one brief glance tells them I'm not a bull and therefore beneath notice—Still, you can't tell. A number of the funloving lads on the gang give vivid and explicit accounts of illicit relations with cows, and it may be that the harrassed and confused animals have put down the whole human race as warped, or inconstant, or at the very least, impotent... I think I shall leave all that to the admirable Kinsey.

Thank you ever so much for the deuce and the stamps and postcards. I was able to get a haircut, buy some tobacco and writing paper, and some food that wasn't drowning in glutinous gravy. Our cook is a con who was a merchant mariner and he seems to believe that if it ain't afloat it ain't digestible. As a result, I am awash most of the time.

I have the published versions of four plays I'd like to send you, if you care to send me about forty cents in stamps, and if you're interested. Not hawking anything, I just would like to reciprocate in any way I can. They are *Rose Tattoo*, *King and I*, *Moon Is Blue* and *Gioconda Smile*. If you don't read plays yourself, you might know someone who does.

You ask who is Ward McAllister. That was a feeble and forced little joke at best, and being made to explain it is probably the punishment I deserve. Ward McAllister was a social arbiter of the 90's or thereabouts, who conceived the idea of the elite "400." He waged an apocalyptic battle with Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish or somebody, in an era conceivably

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less harried than this one. My mind is filled with utterly useless information like that. Yours, B.

DEC. 20, 1951.

Dear Bud:

The silence from the oleander bush is ominous. You salty about somethings Papa, or you in jail? I miss your letters and the *New Yorkers* you have been sending. The magazines are wonderful of course, but most of all I miss your letters.

Haven't heard from Lisa either, and I'm feeling completely abandoned and ill-used. "Is it nothing to ye, all ye who pass by?"

Verging on tears, B.

DEC. 23, 1951

Dear Bud:

...I had a chance to take off from here a couple of weeks back. Another inmate arranged a pickup and a ride to Georgia, for a consideration, and asked me if I wanted to go along. I wrote to Louie asking him to lend me the loot and got the Old Ignore. Reassuring, somehow, in a world fraught with change, that Louie remains the Eternal Shit-Bird. The guy took off with another con, and they're in Chicago now. Thinking it over though, the risk was perhaps too great, I have less than five months to go, and it would have been just my style to step on my dick again.

To brighten the nights a little, I have started a little bootlegging operation, making "buck" (prison liquor) out of cornbread, cane syrup and water. The result is quite pleasant, tastes something like cider with a mild boot. I plan to let the next run ferment a little longer to increase its potency. The penalty for getting caught at it is ten days in the hole, but my cell, for some reason, is never shaken-down, and only one other con knows about the stuff.

The legendary "silence" of prisons ("death to the squealer", and all) does not apply here. The joint is full of cheese-eaters,

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and The Man usually knows what you're doing before you do. I believe that I and my boy—a strange and somber Irish lad fresh from ten years in stir—are the only two in the whole joint who don't gossip like old women. Ever, B.

DEC. 30, 1951.

Dear Bud:

I was somewhat rocked to hear the Lisa had shown you the letters I wrote her. Mutual confidences between Lisa and me have always been of the nothing-barred variety, and as I remember I out-diaried Kafka in several of those lurid missives. Shock, perhaps. Certainly, before that savage and doomed affair with Joey, the guy who ran with me, I had never come up against such naked violence (almost indecently apt for what I did encounter) and the fact that it did not unseat my reason convinces me that I am completely imperturbable.

But I know I can never forget the several shattering days of that abortive escape attempt, nor the events that led up to it. Nor Joey. Recently he kited a letter out of Raxley to me—and I am dismayed to realize that the flame burns perversely on between us. Clearly, I am a neurotic glassbrain, mired in "nostalgie de la boue".

In speaking of the letters Lisa so thoughtfully showed you, you make use of the terms, "terrific" and "classic". Be it known that I am wary of compliments, particularly from persons whom I suspect of cleverness.

As to why I am more concerned with what goes on outside than with what goes on here, it is because so little of what goes on here interests me. There are a number of drab little intrigues stewing all the time, which I keep clear of as being unprofitable as well as dull.

And always, the running to The Man with tales true and untrue. (I expect my small bootlegging operation to get knocked off any day.) Nothing more clearly illustrates the anomalous character of this place than the fact that such tale-bearing is bewailed but tolerated.

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As to the attitude of the authorities towards me and the aberrant sex department, it seems to be a blend of detachment and sophistication which I call sinister. I know they are aware of what cooks (a couple of trusties have told me that the assistant warden refers to me as The Whore.) Maybe they think it's the same thing as keeping a cat around a racing stable.

So I am saddled with a kind of sticky notoriety that I did not seek and do not want.

My present "protector" is a huge bull of a guy from Louisiana, with a hair-trigger temper, whom I keep happy by the simple expedient of complying wit' his wishes. He has the cell next to mine in the isolation block, having been put there for beating up on just about everybody in the joint. I feed him flattery that would floor someone more discerning, but on him it just begets a fatuous expression. Demeaning, degrading, de-lovely...

On Wednesday and Saturday, Bayou Boy and I are taken out of our cells and up to the main dormitory to use the showers. The guards then go back to their poker game in the office until lights-out, when we are returned to our cells.

During the time we are up in the dormitory, we shower first—then Bayou Boy drapes blankets around a tier of bunks in the dimly-lighted rear of the dormitory (briskly evicting any occupant of the bunks). This contrivance is called the Wigwam, and... well, need I continue?—I don't have to draw a picture.

Thus the extra-curricular activities. Is it any wonder that I try to turn my thoughts elsewhere, like a roach trying to climb out of a bottle?

It's no use to piss and moan about it; if I made a Thing of it and let it drag me, I really would flip. I can't do without the shower and I daren't cross Bayou Boy—I've seen others try, and the results were pretty apocalyptic. And I think that in that dim brute-mind there is a notion that his part of *entrepreneur* in the proceedings gives a certain cachet. Oh well.

So I can only sweat it out and remember Whitman's

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convenient, "It was not I who sinned the sin, the ruthless body dragged me in."

You speak of my "good institutional adjustment". You could call it that, but it's the understatement of the year.

Ever, B.

JAN 1, 1952.

Dear X.:

I have been meaning to write earlier to thank you for that astounding box you sent, but the work we have been doing lately has left me so exhausted at the end of the day that I have been asleep when I hit the pad.

We have been widening a right-of-way on one of the county roads, cutting through a solid wall of vegetation. I remember reading once in one of those bleary South Seas novels that Nature in the jungle was almost a malignant force in its ferocious growth. After battling it for a week, being strangled by vines and tripped up by roots, I am ready to believe in the malevolence of Nature.

As to that prodigous box, I have been like a fat lady with a barrel of chocolates or a dog with an array of bones. I have been gorging myself on *New Yorkers*, after dipping into that curious volume "Prison Days and Nights". (That was a rather pixie-ish inclusion. You aren't being flip with me, are you, lad? And wherever did you find it?)

It's absorbing though, and by comparison makes my situation seem like a breeze.

As you have probably read in the papers, the simmering witchesbrew of fear and ignorance (real Southern cooking) has boiled over into murder again. The Florida murder of a Negro prisoner by a sheriff's deputy in Tavares and the murder of the Negro leader Moore near Sanford are reprehensible, in local opinion.

For the reason that they bring the unwelcome light of publicity into the dark hinterlands here, dark with the pall of proud and willful ignorance and carefully-nurtured prejudice.

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With a thick pink smooth Baptist icing.

Incidentally, two Baptist ladies come out every Saturday to hold Bible classes here, Negroes on one side, whites on the other. After the Baptist lady has fervently assured the whites of the heavenly awards awaiting the righteous, she always turns to the Negroes with a kind of hasty "and-of-course-you-too" addendum. In dealing out threats of Hell for the wicked, she gives the colored side the same breezy after-thought treatment.

I always have the curious sensation that she has a comfortable secret knowledge that in Heaven there are toilets and drinking-fountains marked "White" and "Colored". In Hell of course, there are no such provisions. Which is what makes it, indubitably, Hell.

Did you know that mothers down here threaten unruly children with "If you don't behave I'll send you to the nigger school?"

So watch it, Junior, or you'll wind up doing Black Algebra.

Yours, B.

JAN. 13, 1952.

Dear X.:

Of the books you sent, I've enjoyed re-reading *Huck Finn* very much and D. H. Lawrence's hotsy-totsy opus *The Lost Girl*, new to me. Some rather shrewd and delightful humor in this Lawrence book, though, something I've encountered in his other things.

One thing I have noticed about Lawrence, though (said the mountain, proudly bringing forth a mouse). I ran across *Lady Chatterly* not long ago and re-read it. To my intense disappointment, most of the "hot parts" were deleted, and it was spangled with asterisks—but in both books, it seemed to me that his descriptions of scenes of passion, or bedroom bouts, were almost womanishly fervent. That is, the viewpoint seemed to be female. Curious.

However, maybe it is all "in the eye of the beholder", and instead of being penetrating, I am merely tipping my mitt. The hell with it.

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I heard a story the other day that has haunted me since. One of the guys on the crew is a one-armed fellow called "Tub", a cheerful garrulous villain who doesn't do anything but water the men and spin yarn endlessly. He has been in the state pen, a couple of times, and on one of his stays there it was his job to drive a muledrawn wagon that took the colored women prisoners from the prison to the cane fields where they worked. At dinner time, none of the women would eat the beans out of the big pot, as they came from the prison kitchen. Instead each one would carry a tin can, put her beans in that, cover them with cane syrup, and build a separate fire to cook them over—so that there were always twenty-four separate fires going, a woman bending over each one.

Two of the girls on the crew were named Helen and Josie. Josie was a "bull-dagger" or active Lesbian, and Helen was her chosen partner, her "mate". Another girl who was also a bull-dagger had recently joined the crew, and Josie had transferred her affections and her favors to the newcomer.

During the late afternoon fifteen-minute break when the prisoners were allowed to rest and smoke, Josie asked Tub to lend her his knife to trim off the end of some cane she was chewing. And when nobody was looking, she stabbed Helen several times. There was no way to get her back to the prison but the mule wagon, and on that slow rough ride over the rutted roads, the file of colored girls following like a cortege, the beautiful and faithless Helen bled her life out, in the flat and somber back-country. A dismal place for a soul to find itself adrift.

I should like to write that story, but I'm afraid even Quiller-Couch couldn't help me.

Once again I must thank you for enclosing the deuce, the envelopes and all those stamps. I long for the day when I can make some practical return, instead of merely emitting clouds of gratitude when squeezed, like one of those plastic deodorant bottles. Yours, B.

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JAN. 16, 1952.

Dear Bud:

I rather regretted mailing that last letter after I had done so, but you asked for some information as to what went on here, and I thought perhaps some of the racier details of the social whirl were indicated. And that bland mention of my "good institutional adjustment" nettled me somewhat, at a time when I was struggling with an impossible situation.

I was close to despair, really, and determined not to succumb to it. That may explain the lack of restraint that I exhibited.

At any rate, things have taken a considerable turn for the better. In a situation like this, where one's immediate future is so completely in the hands of the authorities, changes can occur with no warning at all, and that is what has happened.

Ever, B.

JAN. 27, 1952.

Dear X.:

I kited a letter out to you a couple of weeks ago, and not having heard from you, I am wondering if the letter ever got out. That happens frequently around here, convicts being rather tricky and unpredictable creatures. In the letter I sent I mentioned that the power tube of the radio you sent had gone out. I have since given the radio to one of the shotgun guards who does repair work as a sideline, and in the revered tradition of all radio repair men, he found a number of other things wrong, so that the bill is five dollars, which I must pay before I get the radio back.

Perhaps you are annoyed at my asking you for the loot, for which I couldn't blame you less. But please be assured that I fully intend to repay anything you have sent me. This is not to detract in any way from the warm great-heartedness you have shown towards me and my dingy situation since I have been here; your kindness has been the brightest spot in an otherwise pretty murky existence. But there is after all no reason why you should subsidize me with no thought of any return.

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The important thing above all to me is that I may continue to have your regard and good will—they have become rather important to me.

I have about three months and twenty-three days to go—then I can stop being the eternal suppliant and take a more active part in the scheme of things. The day of liberation still seems remote, but inevitably it must come. It scares me somewhat to contemplate it, but I understand that buck-fever is not unusual among convicts approaching release.

I have been given a cellmate, after a long spell of being alone. It has taken a little adjusting, and I miss my precious solitude, but we are getting on fairly well now. He is a massive husky Irishman from South Boston named Tom, has done time in numerous pens, has a bottomless amorality, and is a source of new knowledge, wonder and astonishment to me. Tom has been a jack-roller on Clark Street in Chicago, and tells zestfully of sending untold numbers of "marks" rocketing into oblivion through the use of chloral hydrate. Matter of fact he urgently wants me to send him a supply of the drug from Chicago, for use in recouping his fortunes when he is released. Here, at least to me, is a new twist—chloral hydrate as the be-all and end-all, the "Sesame" to success. I hesitate to abet such a dubious operation, and I am filled anew with wonder at the predatory inclinations of certain of the human species. Yours, B.

FEB. 10, 1952.

Dear X.:

Thank you, father, for the fin and the postcards. Once more there is music in the air in this dullest of all possible jails, and life creeps its petty pace from day to day, but the weight of it somewhat mitigated.

My new cellmate, Tom, continues to be something of a mixed blessing. Before his advent, I had grown to like my solitude, with its opportunity for contemplation and long thoughts, and for reading. Now I find myself a captive audience for the rambling autobiography of a malefactor.

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I realize now that I have been grieviously duped by all the crime movies I have seen, all the books about criminals I have read—I had been led to believe that criminals were tight-lipped, taciturn menacing gents who talked in grudging monosyllables.

Not so. All of them I've run across in here have been as extroverted as puppies, pathetically eager, nay, insistent, to tell *all* about their depredations. I could almost believe that lacking any other listener, they would fasten to the lapels of a policeman and never let go till they had related the gripping story of their misdeeds. Garrulous little buggers...

Yours, B.

MAR. 16, 1952.

Dear Bud:

...I am delighted to see Bayou Boy get the parole and wish him a speedy departure. Only then, I guess, can I feel entirely free from his domination. Yesterday, he detained me in the shower room for the old and sickeningly familiar reason, and I was numb with helpless rage for the rest of the day.

I shall be overjoyed when all this sticky nightmare is over. This breed of humans fills me with a vast weariness. I prefer cats, dogs and pianos. Yours, B.

MAR. 23, 1952.

Dear X.:

Thousand thanks for the fin. My ever-lovin' cellmate and I were really on the rocks. It appears now that I have took him to raise, but the benefit of his protection outweights any financial outlay I have to make. He's rough enough to keep the other characters at bay. His autobiography drones on, and there are times it makes me wish I could vomit at will—it would be a neat succinct way of expressing the desperate ennui that comes over me.

I hope I never come under your sights as did the hapless P. Bowles. I'd like to read that review, if it's still around. I may

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as well admit that my memory of the book is a prurient one—I remember mainly the goings-on of the heroine and that derned Ay-rab. But I still think that Bowles is capable of some formidable flights of creative imagination. I assume it is a completely objective performance. If it is not, he's holding out on his psychiatrist and the worst is yet to come.

I've completed about half of a story that has been hanging around in the back of my mind lately. I should like to send it to you for inspection when it is finished, but I shan't insist.—Anyway, I have set the thing down in my inimitable lurching prose, and even if you blast it I shall simply murmur a tranquil "Philistine!" and remain serene.

They tell a story about Gide and the piano in his studio. He would sit at it, placing his fingers on the keys, but never play. Said he was haunted by the fear that somebody would be listening. It is something like that with me when I try to write. I conjure up an imaginary reader—his face is unidentifiable, but I can see the pursed lips, the judicious mien, dawning slowly into disapproval as he reads. There is a sad wondering shake of the head. Most unsettling. But I persist. Yours, B.

MAR. 30, 1952.

Dear Bud:

I am writing this under something of a handicap, having sustained a bone-deep cut on the first finger of my right hand while removing an old rusty pipe from a culvert. However, I think it wil heal all right.

Many thinks for the shipment of magazines.

Fifty days left of this durance vile, and they get longer all the time. I'm building pretty hard time now, waiting for the day. At the end of it, I have the problem of getting up north, but that doesn't dim in any way my eagerness to be out and away.

Whatever became of your sailor suit? I could make good use of it hitch-hiking north. True, I'd probably make a slightly over-seasoned salt, but these are parlous times, and everybody is more or less harried and confused.

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APRIL 13, 1952.

Dear X.:

Another great howling box of goodies! Dammit man, you're just too much. I can only say again, sincere thanks.

The salacious pictures on the pocket-books you sent aroused a clamor in the vitals of the happy mongoloid who is my cellmate, and forthwith he plunged eagerly into them. But he soon emerged bristling with frustration. The literary tone, and you can take it from him, is entirely too high. A student of Spillane and ilk, he seemed to feel that he had been roundly tricked.

The story that I was trying to write remains half-finished and I think it will stay that way until after I leave here. I am unable to work with such a distracting presence in the same cell. And there is the lurking suspicion that it doesn't matter a hell of a lot if it's never finished. Even so, I shall persist.

Friday we worked deep in the swamp, repairing a sandy road leading into a fishing camp. We caught a couple of alligator terrapin turtles, an extremely belligerent type with a neck six inches long, which it uses to strike with the lightning swiftness of a snake, and jaws which can snap a finger off. The gang cook enticed its head out by waving a stick before it. When the turtle struck, he gave it repeated vicious blows on the head. There was wrung from the beast a small choked cry of such mortal agony that I shall never forget it. It seemed to come out of centuries of silence. Lord, I was shaken!

I am reading the *Short Novels of Colette*, which I should like to pass on to you, if you want to read them. For one in love, as I believe you to be, they have an added poignancy.

APRIL 20, 1952.

Dear X.:

This will be a tough one to write, so I shall just plunge into it. I am getting out in twenty-nine days, and would like to borrow fifty dollars to get back through the Union lines.

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The prospect of having to hitch-hike through all those southern counties, all of them eager to recruit penniless wayfarers into their road camps, is about as inviting as a trip across Niagara on a slack wire.

In addition to my fare, I need clothes for the trip. The clothes I had when I came in here have not been improved through laying in a burlap bag in a damp store-room for twenty months. I was allowed to inspect them yesterday, and they're hopeless. The shoes are cracked and covered with mold, the slacks have been riddled by some kind of varmints.

The official reaction to my outraged amazement was a bland indifference.

I am profoundly ashamed of being such a nuisance, of forever being the droning importunate, but there is nobody else I can ask. The people I'm going to in Wisconsin are far from well-off, and will be depending on me to help out when I get there.

I shan't be able to start repaying you for a month or so after I get out. I figure it may take that long to get my fingers back in shape. After that, I can easily get a job in a river town replete with gambling hells and roadhouses.

If you decide to help me (once more!) and send the fifty bucks I need, I shall deposit it in the prison office till I leave. Then I will be able to shed this anxiety and to these last weeks, which get longer as my time gets shorter...

Yours, B.

APRIL 27, 1952.

Dear Bud:

Can't tell you how much your offer of help relieved my mind. I had visions of making every labor gang from here to Cincy, finally trudging along Clark Street in Chicago with a long white beard, looking for the familiar strip teasers, only to find they were all long since married to marks and living in Oak Park.

I had a couple of hectic days as a trusty, when one of the guys in the kitchen was laid up. Because of my short-time,

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I took his place, and it led to rather an amusing contretemps.

I had previously made friends with one of the colored trusties, guy named Pete M., who used to blow tenor sax in bands around New York and Philly. A delightful guy, pretty hip, and a pleasure to talk with after all the pedestrian conversation I get from the white stiffs around here.

Pete works in the colored kitchen, so we were free between meals to kick around on the extensive grounds of the stockade. He got hold of a little keef, and we managed to fly out on it a couple of times.

Seems we not only breached the color line, but gave it a compound fracture, you might say.

Somebody ratted us off, and I was put back on the work gang. They had Pete on the mat in the office, asking all kinds of probing questions. As he told me later, he gave them the Uncle-Tom-yassuh-boss routine that many intelligent Negroes use in their dealing with crackers, and they were forced to let the matter drop.

They never even came near me. Untouchable, I guess. Anyway it hasn't altered my status, except I get some fishy looks, and I still get out on that golden day, May 20. But I shall tread softly hereafter. Yours, B.

APRIL 27, 1952.

Dear X.:

"Shall no far April heal my pain, shall no Spring make me whole again?" Twenty-three days to go, and the anticipation of freedom is killing me. When I was a child (shortly after the Crusades), there was always a long endless night that had to be somehow lived through before the coming of dawn on Christmas morning. I am feeling again something of that agony of waiting. On the road every day I work like a demon, tiring myself out so that I shall fall asleep the moment I hit the pad. It is for that moment my traitorous mind lies in wait to run riot...

You and Bud are kinder than I can say to make it possible for me to extricate myself from this Dixie debacle. I was

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in hope that you-all would see fit to lend me enough loot to get the new shoes and slacks I so badly need. There's a guard here, a fine guy, who has agreed to shop in town for what I need if I give him the money. But if it's too much, just skip it, you're doing an awful lot as it is.

Incidentally, I get a big five bucks from the county when I leave here. No peon, I.

JUNE 4, 1952.
_____ Wis.

Dear Bud:

Arrived more dead than alive after one of those cunningly contrived Greyhound safaris—contrived, I suspect, by the railroad interests.

The peace and quiet, the beauty and serenity of my present surroundings may in time enable me to find an answer to the confusion that still besets me. In time, I hope that I may cease to feel like Lazarus adrift.

I practise the piano daily and hope soon to be able to go to Dubuque and find a playing job. It was gratifying to find that not all digital dexterity had vanished.

So all is not lost—soon, in a small corner of the world of music, I shall be playing my small sad keening songs—or my wistfully gay ones, which are even sadder, Mac. It is the moment I lie in wait for, when humans are weakened by night and alcohol, and I can take them back to the treacherous warmth and joy of the past.

JUNE, 1952.

Dear X.:

If you find the timid little manifestations of Nature that surround you now abhorrent, I wonder what would be your reaction to the countryside I find myself in. Great roaring booming hills on all sides, and at night the demented in-

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cessant cry of the whippoorwill, or the foxes on the hills, sounding at times like shrill hysterical girls, at other times oddly like asthma victims gasping their last.

In these faintly inimical surroundings, I work at physical labor most of the day—I do not know why exactly, but it seems important to me that I remain physically hard. When I have finished working, I follow the rocky course of a brook to a pool in the woods and there bathe in the paralyzingly cold water.

I practise the piano for a couple of hours every day. All this in an effort to lay the spectre I seem to be locked in with—the dogged memory of Joey D., and the year I had with him in the chain gang. With him, for the first time in a disordered jangling dreamlike life, I really came alive.

I want to try to write a comedy about what went on in the chain gang. Enough happened that was ludicrous to make a funny story, and playing it for laughs is really all I think I'm capable of. When I suffer, I sweat. Yours, B.

All of which is vaporous nonsense, of course. I have decided to approach the problem of diverting the public with a studious nonchalance. I merely want to make money and leave the travails of Art to the younger and sturdier. I've had it.

_____ Wisconsin
JUNE, 1952.

Dear Bud:

I shall write this rapidly and mail it as quickly, because I think what I have to say might later seem to me shameful or weak. (Oh God, I hear you say).

I am wandering around in these enormous hills up here with a load of guilt or apprehension or whatever it is, meant for a mule. These people are kind and understanding, but there is not a single goddam thing in the world that will help me other than going to work and being in a position to help others, and to repay what I have already taken. I

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want and need so desperately to break through this wall, and to get back to the land of the living. They are poisonous, vicious, dull, I know, and I want to join them in their nefarious games. Contemplation drives me nuts.

And at the back and bottom of my mind is the realization that I shall come soon to think of the chain gang and the time I spent there as my finest hour. I simply cannot let it happen, I've got to begin quickly to make loud noises to exorcise that demon.

It's too easy to crawl back inside the gates. I want to stay out and do battle—but I need a couple of hammers.

Outside in the night at this moment the whippoorwills, with idiot intensity are singing their urgent questing song. I think I find them soothing because they are more possessed than I.

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II

FROM "A THIEF'S JOURNAL"

BY JEAN GENET

Two Criminal Records photographs have turned up. In one of them I am sixteen or seventeen years old. I am wearing, under a jacket of the *Assistance Publique*, a torn sweater. My face is an oval, very pure; my nose is smashed, flattened by a punch in some forgotten fight. The look on my face is blasé, sad and warm, very serious. My hair was thick and unruly. Seeing myself at that age, I expressed my feelings almost aloud:

"Poor little fellow, you've suffered."

I was speaking kindly of another Jean who was not myself. I suffered at the time from an ugliness I no longer find on my childhood face. Nevertheless, crass insolence—I was brazen—launched me forth into life with ease. If I was anxious, it was not apparent at first. But at twilight, when I was weary, my head would sink, and I would feel my gaze lingering on the world and merging with it or else turning inward and disappearing; I think it knew my utter solitude. When I was a farm-hand, when I was a soldier, when I was at the orphanage, despite the friendship and, occasionally, the affection of my masters, I was alone, rigorously so. Prison offered me the first consolation, the first peace, the first friendly confusion: I experienced them in the realm of foulness. Much solitude had forced me to become my own companion. Envisaging the external world, its indefiniteness, its confusion, which is even more perfect at night, I set it up as a divinity of which I was not only the cherished pretext, an object of great care and caution, chosen and led in masterly fashion, though through

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painful and exhausting ordeals, to the verge of despair, but also the sole object of all this labor. And little by little, through a kind of operation which I can not quite describe, without modifying the dimensions of my body, and perhaps because it was easier to contain so precious a reason for such glory, it was within me that I established this divinity—origin and disposition of myself. I swallowed it. I dedicated to it songs of my own invention. At night I would whistle. The melody was a religious one. It was slow. Its rhythm was somewhat heavy. I thought that I was thereby entering into communication with God: which is what happened, God being only the hope and fervor contained in my song. Along the streets, with my hands in my pockets, my head drooping or held high, looking at houses or trees, I would whistle my clumsy hymns, not joyous, but not sad either: sober. I discovered that hope is merely the expression one gives to it. Likewise, protection. Never would I have whistled to a light rhythm. I recognized the religious themes: they create Venus, Mercury, or the Virgin.

In the second photo I am thirty years old. My face has hardened. The jaws are accentuated. The mouth is bitter and mean. I look like a hoodlum in spite of my eyes, which have remained gentle. Their gentleness is almost indiscernible because of the fixity of gaze imposed upon me by the official photographer. By means of these two pictures I can see the violence with which I was filled at the time: from the age of sixteen to thirty. In children's hells, in prisons, in bars, it was not heroic adventure that I sought; I pursued my identification with the handsomest and most unfortunate criminals. I wanted to be the young prostitute who accompanies her lover to Siberia or the one who survives him, not in order to avenge him, but to mourn him and magnify his memory.

Without thinking myself magnificently born, the uncertainty of my origin allowed me to interpret it. I added to it the peculiarity of my misfortunes. Abandoned by my family, I felt it was natural to aggravate this condition by a preference for boys, and this preference by theft, and theft by crime or a complacent attitude in regard to crime. Hence, I resolutely

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rejected a world which had rejected me. This almost gleeful rushing into the most humiliating situations is perhaps still motivated by my childhood imagination which invented for me (so that I might there squire about the slight and haughty person of an abandoned little boy) castles, parks peopled with guards rather than with statues, wedding gowns, bereavements and nuptials, and later on (though just a trifle later, when these reveries were thwarted to the extreme, to the point of exhaustion in a life of wretchedness, by penitentiaries and prisons and thefts), insults, prostitution, quite naturally the adornments (and the rare diction pertaining to them) which graced my mental habits and the objects of my desire. I used them to adorn my real situation as an adult, but first as a child whom knowledge of prisons was to gratify to the full. Prison offers the same feeling of security to the convict as does a royal palace to a king's guest. They are the two buildings constructed with the most faith, those which give the greatest certainty of being what they are—which are what they meant to be, and which they remain. The masonry, the materials, the proportions and the architecture are in harmony with a social whole which makes these dwellings indestructible so long as the social form of which they are the symbol endures. The prison surrounds me with a perfect guarantee. I am sure that it was constructed for me—along with the Law Court, its annex, its monumental vestibule. Everything therein was designed for me, in keeping with the utmost seriousness. The rigor of the rules, their strictness, their precision, are in essence the same as the etiquette of a royal court, as the exquisite and tyrannical politeness of which a guest at that court is the object. The foundations of the palace, like those of the prison, inhere in the fine quality of the stone, in marble stairways, in real gold, in carvings, the rarest in the realm, in the absolute power of their hosts; but they are also similar in that these two structures are one the root and the other the crest of a living system circulating between these two poles which contain it, hold it in check and which are sheer force. What security in the carpets, in the mirrors, in the very intimacy of the palace latrines! Nowhere else does the act of shitting in

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the early morning assume the solemn importance which can result only from its being performed in a closet through whose frosted windows can be discerned the sculptured façade, the guards, the statutes and the court of honor; in a little privy where the tissue paper is of the usual kind but where some uncombed, unpowdered, powdery maid of honor in a satin dressing-gown and pink slippers will shortly come to leave a heavy load; in a little privy from which the husky guards do not brutally expel me, for shitting there becomes an important act which has its place in a life to which a king has invited me. Prison offers me the same security. Nothing will demolish it, not blasts of wind, nor storms, not bankruptcies. The prison remains sure of itself, and you in the midst of it sure of yourself. And yet it is this spirit of seriousness in which they were erected which is the source of their self-esteem, of their mutual reserve and understanding; it is of this spirit of worldliness that they will perish. Were they established on the ground and in the world with more negligence, they might perhaps hold out for a long time, but their gravity makes me consider them without pity. I recognize that they have their foundations within myself; they are the signs of the most violent of my extreme tendencies, and my corrosive spirit is already working at their destruction. I pitched myself headlong into a miserable life which was the real appearance of destroyed palaces, of pillaged gardens, of dead splendors. It was their ruins, but, the more mutilated the ruins, the remoter seemed that of which they must have been the visible sign, more deeply buried in a sacred past, so that I no longer know whether I dwelt in sumptuous destitution, or whether my abjection was magnificent. Finally, little by little, this idea of humiliation detached itself from what conditioned it; the cables connecting it with these ideal gildings were broken—justifying it in the eyes of the world, in my eyes of flesh—almost excusing it, and it remained alone, by itself alone a reason for being, itself its only necessity and itself its only end. But it is the abandoned urchin's amorous imagining of royal deeds that enables me to gild my shame, to carve it, to work over it like a goldsmith, in the usual sense of the term, until,

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through usage perhaps and the wearing away of the words veiling it, humility might emerge from it. My love of Stilitano made me aware of so exceptional a disposition. Though I had known through him a certain nobility, now I was discovering the real direction of my life—as one says the direction through the woods—and that my life should manifest itself outside your world. I knew at the time a hardness and lucidity which explain my attitude toward the poor: so great was my destitution that it seemed to me I was composed of a dough that had been kneaded of it. It was my very essence, traversing and feeding my body as well as my soul. I am writing this book in an elegant hotel in one of the most luxurious cities in the world, where I am rich, though I can not pity the poor: I am the poor. Though it may be a pleasure for me to strut before them, I most definitely deplore being unable to do so with more ostentation and insolence.

"I'd have a black, noiseless, shiny car. From inside, I would look out at poverty unconcernedly. Behind me would trail processions of myself in lavish finery so that poverty might watch me going by, so that the poor whom I shall not have ceased to be may see me slowing up nobly amidst the silence of a *de luxe* motor and in all the earthly and emblematic glory, if I wish, of the other."

(Translated by Bernard Frechtman)

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THE ASSIGNATION

After the winter thawed away, I rose,
Remembering what you said. Below the field
Where I was dead, the crinkled leaf and blade
Summoned my body, told me I must go.
Across the road I saw some other dead
Revive their little fires, and bow the head
To someone still alive and long ago.
Low in the haze a pall of smoke arose.

Inside the moon's hollow is a hale gray man
Who washed his hands, and waved me where to go:
Up the long hill, the mound of lunar snow,
Around three lapping pebbles, over the crossed
Arms of an owl nailed to the southern sky.
I spun three times about, I scattered high,
Over my shoulder, clouds of salt and dust.
The earth began to clear. I saw a man.

He said the sun was falling toward the trees,
The picnic nearly over. Small on the lake
The sails were luring lightning out of the dark,
While quieter people guided slim canoes.
I hid in bushes, shy. Already cars
Shuttled away, the earliest evening stars
Blurred in a cloud. A lone child left his shoes
Half in the sand, and slept beneath the trees.

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With fires demolished, everybody gone
To root in bushes, congregate by trees
Or haul the yellow windows down to haze,
I lost my way. Water in water fell,
The badgers nibbled rootlets up the shore
For dancing more than food, where long before
Women had gossiped. Chanting a soft farewell,
Canaries swung. Then everything was gone.

No hurry for me there, I let my dress
Fall to the lawn, the pleasure of the silk
Wind with the subtle grass, berries and milk
Of skin sweeten me. Snuggling, I lay prone,
Barren yet motherly for what might come
Out of the emptied branches, man or flame.
I shivered slightly. Everything was gone,
Everyone gone. I kicked aside my dress.

O then it was you I waited for, to hold
The soft leaves of my bones between your hands
And warm them back to life, to fashion wands
Out of my shining arms. O it was you
I loved before my dying and long after,
You, you I could not find. The air fell softer,
My snatch of breath gave out, but no one blew
My name in hollowed weeds. Lonely to hold

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Some hand upon me, lest it float away
And be as dead as I, thrown in a sack
Of air to drown in air, I rose, lay back
In trees, and died again. The spiders care
For trellises they hold against the sky,
Except for walls of air the houses die
And fall; and only for my flesh of air
Your flesh of air would lean and drift away;

But you cared nothing, living, false to me.
What could I do but take a daemon then
And slouch about in dust, eager for pain
Or anything, to keep your memory clear?
A thing came down from the dark air on wings
And rummaged at my limbs, to hold my wings
Down in the dirt; I could not see for fear.
The thing withdrew, full of the dark and me.

And I was riven. Even my poor ghost
Can never stand beside your window now;
I stir the wind, I chatter at a bough,
But make no sound. Your cowardice may keep
You from your assignation with my ghost,
The love you promised me when I was dust,
Not air. And yet I cannot even sleep,
I cannot die, but I will feel my ghost

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Driven to find this orchard every year,
This picnic ground, and wait till everyone
Tires of the sundown, turns the headlights on,
To float them off like moths into the dark.
I will stand up to strip my hunger off,
And stare, and mumble, knowing all your love
Is cut beside my name on the white rock,
While you forget the promise and the year.

You sat beside the bed, you took my hands;
And when I lay beyond all speech, you said,
You swore to love me after I was dead,
To meet me in a grove and love me still,
Love the white air, the shadow where it lay.
Dear love, I called your name in air today,
I saw the picnic vanish down the hill,
And waved the moon awake, with empty hands.

—JAMES WRIGHT

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RICHARD YATES

A WRESTLER WITH SHARKS

NOBODY had much respect for *The Labor Leader*. Even Finkel and Kramm, its owners, the two sour brothers-in-law who'd dreamed it up in the first place and who somehow managed to make a profit on it year after year—even they could take little pride in the thing. At least, that's what I used to suspect from the way they'd hump grudgingly around the office, shivering the bile-green partitions with their thumps and shouts, grabbing and tearing at galley-proofs, breaking pencil-points, dropping wet cigar butts on the floor and slamming telephones contemptuously into their cradles. *The Labor Leader* was all either of them would ever have for a life's work, and they seemed to hate it.

You couldn't blame them: the thing was a monster. In format it was a fat bi-weekly tabloid, badly printed, that spilled easily out of your hands and was very hard to put together again in the right order; in policy it called itself "An Independent Newspaper Pledged to the Spirit of the Trade Union Movement," but its real pitch was to be a kind of trade-journal for union officials, who subscribed to it out of union funds and who must surely have been inclined to tolerate, rather than to want or need, whatever thin sustenance it gave them. The *Leader's* coverage of national events "from the labor angle" was certain to be stale, likely to be muddled, and often opaque with typographical errors; most of its dense columns were filled with flattering reports on the

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doings of the unions whose leaders were on the subscription list, often to the exclusion of much bigger news about those whose leaders weren't. And every issue carried scores of simple-minded ads urging "Harmony" in the names of various small industrial firms that Finkel and Kramm had been able to beg or browbeat into buying space—a compromise that would almost certainly have hobbled a real labor paper but that didn't, typically enough, seem to cramp the *Leader's* style at all.

There was a fast turnover on the editorial staff. Whenever somebody quit, the *Leader* would advertise in the help-wanted section of the *Times*, offering a "moderate salary commensurate with experience." This always brought a good crowd to the sidewalk outside the *Leader* office, a gritty storefront on the lower fringe of the garment district, and Kramm, who was the editor (Finkel was the publisher) would keep them all waiting for half an hour before he picked up a sheaf of application forms, shot his cuffs, and gravely opened the door—I think he enjoyed this occasional chance to play the man of affairs.

"All right, take your time," he'd say as they jostled inside and pressed against the wooden rail that shielded the inner offices. "Take your time, gentlemen." Then he would raise a hand and say: "May I have your attention, please?" And he'd begin to explain the job. Half the applicants would go away when he got to the part about the salary structure, and most of those who remained offered little competition to anyone who was sober, clean and able to construct an English sentence.

That's the way we'd all been hired, the six or eight of us who frowned under the *Leader's* sickly fluorescent lights that winter, and most of us made no secret of our desire for better things. I went to work there a couple of weeks after losing my job on one of the metropolitan dailies, and stayed only until I was rescued the next spring by the big picture magazine that still employs me. The others had other explanations, which, like me, they spent a great deal of time discussing: it was a great place for shrill and redundant hard-luck stories.

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But Leon Sobel joined the staff about a month after I did, and from the moment Kramm led him into the editorial room we all knew he was going to be different. He stood among the messy desks with the look of a man surveying new fields to conquer, and when Kramm introduced him around (forgetting half our names) he made a theatrically solemn business out of shaking hands. He was about thirty-five, older than most of us: a very small, tense man with black hair that seemed to explode from his skull and a humorless thin-lipped face that was blotched with the scars of acne. His eyebrows were always in motion when he talked, and his eyes, not so much piercing as anxious to pierce, never left the eyes of his listener.

The first thing I learned about him was that he'd never held an office job before: he had been a sheet-metal worker all his adult life. What's more, he hadn't come to the *Leader* out of need, like the rest of us, but, as he put it, out of principle. To do so, in fact, he had given up a factory job paying nearly twice the money.

"Wat'sa matter, don'tcha believe me?" he asked after telling me this.

"Well, it's not that," I said, "It's just that I—"

"Maybe you think I'm crazy," he said, and screwed up his face into a canny smile.

I tried to protest, but he wouldn't have it. "Listen, don't worry, McCabe. I'm called crazy a lotta times already. It don't bother me. My wife says, 'Leon, you gotta expect it.' She says, 'People never understand a man who wants something more outa life than just money.' And she's right! She's right!"

"No," I said. "Wait a second, I—"

"People think you gotta be one of two things: either you're a shark, or you gotta lay back and let the sharks eatcha alive—this is the world. Me, I'm the kinda guy's gotta go out and wrestle with the sharks. Why? I dunno why. This is crazy? Okay."

"Wait a second," I said. And I tried to explain that I had nothing whatever against his striking a blow for social justice,

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if that was what he had in mind: it was just that I thought *The Labor Leader* was about the least likely place in the world for him to do it.

But his shrug told me I was quibbling. "So?" he said. "It's a paper, isn't it? Well, I'm a writer. And what good's a writer if he don't get printed? Listen." He lifted one haunch and placed it on the edge of my desk—he was too short a man to do this gracefully, but the force of his argument helped him to bring it off. "Listen, McCabe. You're a young kid yet. I wanna tellya something. Know how many books I wrote already?" And now his hands came into play, as they always did sooner or later. Both stubby fists were thrust under my nose and allowed to shake there for a moment before they burst into a thicket of stiff, quivering fingers—only the thumb of one hand remained folded down. "Nine," he said, and the hands fell limp on his thigh, to rest until he needed them again. "Nine. Novels, philosophy, political theory—the entire gamut. And not one of 'em published. Believe me, I been around a while."

"I believe you," I said.

"So finally I sat down and I figured: What's the answer? And I figured this: The trouble with my books is, they tell the truth. And the truth is a funny thing, McCabe. People wanna read it, but they only wanna read it when it comes from somebody they already know their name. Am I right? So all right. I figure, I wanna write these books, first I gotta build up a name for myself. This is worth any sacrifice. This is the only way. You know something, McCabe? The last one I wrote took me two years?" Two fingers sprang up to illustrate the point, and dropped again. "Two years, working four, five hours every night and all day long on the weekends. And then you oughta seen the crap I got from the publishers. Every damn publisher in town. My wife cried. She says, 'But why, Leon? Why?'" Here his lips curled tight against his small, stained teeth, and the fist of one hand smacked the palm of the other on his thigh, but then he relaxed. "I told her, 'Listen, honey. You know why.'" And now he was smiling at me in quiet triumph. "I says,

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'This book told the truth. That's why.'" Then he winked, slid off my desk and walked away, erect and jaunty in his soiled sport shirt and his dark serge pants that hung loose and shiny in the seat. That was Sobel.

It took him a little while to loosen up in the job: for the first week or so, when he wasn't talking, he went at everything with a zeal and a fear of failure that disconcerted everyone but Finney, the managing editor. Like the rest of us, Sobel had a list of twelve or fifteen union offices around town, and the main part of his job was to keep in touch with them and write up whatever bits of news they gave out. As a rule there was nothing very exciting to write about: the average story ran two or three paragraphs with a single-column head,

PLUMBERS WIN

3c PAY HIKE

or something like that. But Sobel composed them all as carefully as sonnets, and after he'd turned one in he would sit chewing his lips in anxiety until Finney raised a forefinger and said, "C'mere a second, Sobel."

Then he'd go over and stand, nodding apologetically, while Finney pointed out some niggling grammatical flaw. "Never end a sentence with a preposition, Sobel. You don't wanna say, 'gave the plumbers new grounds to bargain on.' You wanna say, 'gave the plumbers new grounds on which to bargain.'"

Finney enjoyed these lectures. The annoying thing, from a spectator's point of view, was that Sobel took so long to learn what everyone else seemed to know instinctively: that Finney was scared of his own shadow and would back down on anything at all if you raised your voice. He was a frail, nervous man who dribbled on his chin when he got excited and raked trembling fingers through his thickly-oiled hair, with the result that his fingers spread hair oil, like a spoor of his personality, to everything he touched: his clothes, his

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pencils, his telephone and his typewriter keys. I guess the main reason he was managing editor was that nobody else would submit to the bullying he took from Kramm: their editorial conferences always began with Kramm shouting "Finney! Finney!" from behind his partition, and Finney jumping like a squirrel to hurry inside. Then you'd hear the relentless drone of Kramm's demands and the quavering sputter of Finney's explanations, and it would end with a thump as Kramm socked his desk. "*No*, Finney. No, no, *no!* What's the matter with you? I gotta draw you a picture? All right, all right, get outa here, I'll do it myself." At first you might wonder why Finney took it—nobody could need a job that badly—but the answer lay in the fact that there were only three by-lined pieces in *The Labor Leader*: a boilerplated sports feature that we got from a syndicate, a ponderous column called "LABOR TODAY, by Julius Kramm" that ran facing the editorial page, and a double-column box in the back of the book with the heading:

BROADWAY BEAT

by Wes Finney.

There was even a thumbnail picture of him in the upper left-hand corner, hair slicked down and teeth bared in a confident smile. The text managed to work in a labor angle here and there—a paragraph on Actors' Equity, say, or the stagehands' union—but mostly he played it straight, in the manner of two or three real broadway-and-nightclub columnists. "Heard about the new thrush at the Copa?" he would ask the labor leaders; then he'd give them her name, with a sly note about her bust and hip measurements and a folksy note about the state from which she "hailed," and he'd wind it up like this: "She's got the whole town talking, and turning up in droves. Their verdict, in which this department wholly concurs: the lady has class." No reader could have guessed that Wes Finney's shoes needed repair, that he got no complimentary tickets to anything and never went out except

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to take in a movie or to crouch over a liverwurst sandwich at the Automat. He wrote the column on his own time and got extra money for it—the figure I heard was $50 a month. So it was a mutually satisfactory deal: for that small sum Kramm held his whipping-boy in absolute bondage; for that small torture Finney could paste clippings in a scrapbook, with all the contamination of *The Labor Leader* sheared away into the wastebasket of his furnished room, and whisper himself to sleep with dreams of ultimate freedom.

Anyway, this was the man who could make Sobel apologize for the grammar of his news stories, and it was a sad thing to watch. Of course, it couldn't go on forever, and one day it stopped.

Finney had called Sobel over to explain about split infinitives, and Sobel was wrinkling his brow in an effort to understand. Neither of them noticed that Kramm was standing in the doorway of his office a few feet away, listening, and looking at the wet end of his cigar as if it tasted terrible.

"Finney," he said. "You wanna be an English teacher, get a job in the high school."

Startled, Finney stuck a pencil behind his ear without noticing that another pencil was already there, and both pencils clattered to the floor. "Well, I—" he said. "I just thought I'd—"

"Finney, this does not interest me. Pick up your pencils and listen to me, please. For your information, Mr. Sobel is not supposed to be a literary Englishman. He is supposed to be a literate American, and I have found him to be one. Do I make myself clear?"

And the look on Sobel's face as he walked back to his own desk was that of a man released from prison.

From that moment on he began to relax; or almost from that moment—what seemed to clinch the transformation was O'Leary's hat.

O'Leary was a recent City College graduate and one of the best men on the staff (he has since done very well; you'll often see his name in one of the evening papers), and the hat he wore that winter was of the waterproof cloth kind

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that is sold in raincoat shops. There was nothing very dashing about it—in fact its floppiness made O'Leary's face look too thin—but Sobel must secretly have admired it as a symbol of journalism, or of non-conformity, for one morning he showed up in an identical one, brand new. It looked even worse on him that on O'Leary, particularly when worn with his lumpy brown overcoat, but he seemed to cherish it. He developed a whole new set of mannerisms to go with the hat: cocking it back with a flip of the index finger as he settled down to make his morning phone calls ("This is Leon Sobel of *The Labor Leader*..."), tugging it smartly forward as he left the office on a reporting assignment, twirling it onto a peg when he came back to write his story. At the end of the day, when he'd dropped the last of his copy into Finney's wire basket, he would shape the hat into a careless slant over one eyebrow, swing the overcoat around his shoulders and stride out with a loose salute of farewell, and I used to picture him studying his reflection in the black subway windows all the way home to the Bronx.

He seemed determined to love his work. He even brought in a snapshot of his family—a tired, abjectly smiling woman and two small sons—and fastened it to his desk-top with cellophane tape. Nobody else ever left anything more personal than a book of matches in the office overnight.

One afternoon toward the end of February, Finney summoned me to his oily desk. "McCabe," he said. "Wanna do a column for us?"

"What kind of a column?"

"Labor gossip," he said. "Straight union items with a gossip or a chatter angle—little humor, personalities, stuff like that. Mr. Kramm thinks we need it, and I told him you'd be the best man for the job."

I can't deny that I was flattered (we are all conditioned by our surroundings, after all), but I was also suspicious. "Do I get a by-line?"

He began to blink nervously. "Oh, no, no by-line," he said. "Mr. Kramm wants this to be anonymous. See, the guys'll give you any items they turn up, and you'll just

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collect 'em and put 'em in shape. It's just something you can do on office time, part of your regular job. See what I mean?"

I saw what he meant. "Part of my regular salary too," I said. "Right?"

"That's right."

"No thanks," I told him, and then, feeling generous, I suggested that he try O'Leary.

"Nah, I already asked him," Finney said. "He don't wanna do it either. Nobody does."

I should have guessed, of course, that he'd been working down the list of everyone in the office. And to judge from the lateness of the day, I must have been close to the tail end.

Sobel fell in step with me as we left the building after work that night. He was wearing his overcoat cloak-style, the sleeves dangling, and holding his cloth hat in place as he hopped nimbly to avoid the furrows of dirty slush on the sidewalk. "Letcha in on a little secret, McCabe," he said. "I'm doin' a column for the paper. It's all arranged."

"Yeah?" I said. "Any money in it?"

"Money?" He winked. "I'll tell y'about that part. Let's get a cuppa coffee." He led me into the tiled and steaming brilliance of the Automat, and when we were settled at a damp corner table he explained everything. "Finney says no money, see? So I said okay. He says no by-line either. I said okay." He winked again. "Playin' it smart."

"How do you mean?"

"How do I mean?" He always repeated your question like that, savoring it, holding his black eyebrows high while he made you wait for the answer. "Listen, I got this Finney figured out. *He* don't decide these things. You think he decides anything around that place? You better wise up, McCabe. Mr. *Kramm* makes the decisions. And Mr. Kramm is an intelligent man, don't kid yourself." Nodding, he raised his coffee cup, but his lips recoiled from the heat of it, puckered, and blew into the steam before they began to sip with gingerly impatience.

"Well," I said, "okay, but I'd check with Kramm before you start counting on anything."

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"Check?" He put his cup down with a clatter. "What's there to check? Listen, Mr. Kramm wants a column, right? You think he cares if I get a by-line or not? Or the money, either—you think if I write a good column he's gonna quibble over payin' me for it? Ya crazy. *Finney's* the one, don'tcha see? *He* don't wanna gimme a break because he's worried about losing his *own* column. Get it? So all right. I check with nobody until I got that column written." He prodded his chest with a stiff thumb. "On my own time. Then I take it to Mr. Kramm and we talk business. You leave it to me." He settled down comfortably, elbows on the table, both hands cradling the cup just short of drinking position while he blew into the steam.

"Well," I said. "I hope you're right. Be nice if it does work out that way."

"Ah, it may not," he conceded, pulling his mouth into a grimace of speculation and tilting his head to one side. "*You* know. It's a gamble." But he was only saying that out of politeness, to minimize my envy. He could afford to express doubt because he felt none, and I could tell he was already planning the way he'd tell his wife about it.

The next morning Finney came around to each of our desks with instructions that we were to give Sobel any gossip or chatter items we might turn up; the column was scheduled to begin in the next issue. Later I saw him in conference with Sobel, briefing him on how the column was to be written, and I noticed that Finney did all the talking: Sobel just sat there making thin, contemptuous jets of cigarette smoke.

We had just put an issue to press, so the deadline for the column was two weeks away. Not many items turned up at first—it was hard enough getting news out of the unions we covered, let alone "chatter". Whenever someone did hand him a note, Sobel would frown over it, add a scribble of his own and drop it in a desk drawer; once or twice I saw him drop one in the wastebasket. I only remember one of the several pieces I gave him: the business agent of a steamfitters' local I covered had yelled at me through a closed door that he couldn't be bothered that day because his wife had just

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had twins. But Sobel didn't want it. "So, the guy's got twins," he said. "So what?"

"Suit yourself," I said. "You getting much other stuff?"

He shrugged. "Some. I'm not worried. I'll tellya one thing, though—I'm not using a lotta this crap. This chatter. Who the hell's gonna read it? You can't have a whole column fulla crap like that. Gotta be something to hold it together. Am I right?"

Another time (the column was all he talked about now) he chuckled affectionately and said, "My wife says I'm just as bad now as when I was working on my books. Write, write, write. She don't care, though," he added. "She's really getting excited about this thing. She's telling everybody—the neighbors, everybody. Her brother come over Sunday, starts asking me how the job's going—you know, in a wise-guy kinda way? I just kept quiet, but my wife pipes up: 'Leon's doing a column for the paper now'—and she tells him all about it. Boy, you oughta seen his face."

Every morning he brought in the work he had done the night before, a wad of handwritten papers, and used his lunch-hour to type it out and revise it while he chewed a sandwich at his desk. And he was the last one to go home every night: we'd leave him there hammering his typewriter in a trance of concentration. Finney kept bothering him—"How you coming on that feature, Sobel?"—but he always parried the question with squinted eyes and a truculent lift of the chin. "Whaddya worried about? You'll get it." And he would wink at me.

On the morning of the deadline he came to work with a little patch of toilet-paper on his cheek: he had cut himself shaving in his nervousness, but otherwise he looked as confident as ever. There were no calls to make that morning—on deadline days we all stayed in to work on copy and proofs—so the first thing he did was to spread out the finished manuscript for a final reading. His absorption was so complete that he didn't look up until Finney was standing at his elbow. "You wanna gimme that feature, Sobel?"

Sobel grabbed up the papers and shielded them with an

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arrogant forearm. He looked steadily at Finney and said, with a firmness that he must have been rehearsing for two weeks: "I'm showing this to Mr. Kramm. Not you."

Finney's whole face began to twitch in a fit of nerves. "Nah, nah, Mr. Kramm don't need to see it," he said. "Anyway, he's not in yet. C'mon, lemme have it."

"You're wasting your time, Finney," Sobel said. "I'm waiting for Mr. Kramm."

Muttering, avoiding Sobel's triumphant eyes, Finney went back to his own desk, where he was reading proof on BROADWAY BEAT.

My own job that morning was at the layout table, pasting up the dummy for the first section. I was standing there, working with the unwieldy page forms and the paste-clogged scissors, when Sobel sidled up behind me, looking anxious. "You wanna read it, McCabe?" he asked. "Before I turn it in?" And he handed me the manuscript.

The first thing that hit me was that he had clipped a photograph to the top of page one, a small portrait of himself in his cloth hat. The next thing was his title:

SOBEL SPEAKING

by LEON SOBEL

I can't remember the exact words of the opening paragraph, but it went something like this:

"This is the "debut" of a new department in *The Labor Leader* and, moreover, it is also "something new" for your correspondent, who has never handled a column before. However, he is far from being a novice with the written word, on the contrary he is an "ink-stained veteran" of many battles on the field of ideas, to be exact nine books have emanated from his pen.

"Naturally in those tomes his task was somewhat different than that which it will be in this column, and yet he hopes that this column will also strive as they did to penetrate the basic human mystery, in other words, to tell the truth."

When I looked up I saw he had picked open the razor-

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cut on his cheek and it was bleeding freely. "Well," I said, "for one thing, I wouldn't give it to him with your picture that way—I mean, don't you think it might be better to let him read it first, and then—"

"Okay," he said, blotting at his face with a wadded gray handkerchief. "Okay, I'll take the picture off. G'ahead, read the rest."

But there wasn't time to read the rest. Kramm had come in, Finney had spoken to him, and now he was standing in the door of his office, champing crossly on a dead cigar. "You wanted to see me, Sobel?" he called.

"Just a second," Sobel said. He straightened the pages of SOBEL SPEAKING and detached the photograph, which he jammed into his hip pocket as he started for the door. Halfway there he remembered to take off his hat, and threw it unsuccessfully at the hat-stand. Then he disappeared behind the partition, and we all settled down to listen.

It wasn't long before Kramm's reaction came through. "*No*, Sobel. No, no, *no!* What *is* this? What are you tryna put *over* on me here?"

Outside, Finney winced comically and clapped the side of his head, giggling, and O'Leary had to glare at him until he stopped.

We heard Sobel's voice, a blurred sentence or two of protest, and then Kramm came through again: "'Basic human mystery'—this is gossip? This is chatter? You can't follow instructions? Wait a minute—Finney! Finney!"

Finney loped to the door, delighted to be of service, and we heard him making clear, righteous replies to Kramm's interrogation: Yes, he had told Sobel what kind of a column was wanted; yes, he had specified that there was to be no by-line; yes, Sobel had been provided with ample gossip material. All we heard from Sobel was something indistinct, said in a very tight, flat voice. Kramm made a guttural reply, and even though we couldn't make out the words we knew it was all over. Then they came out, Finney wearing the foolish smile you sometimes see in the crowds that gape at street accidents, Sobel as expressionless as death.

He picked his hat off the floor and his coat off the stand,

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put them on, and came over to me. "So long, McCabe," he said. "Take it easy."

Shaking hands with him, I felt my face jump into Finney's idiot smile, and I asked a stupid question. "You leaving?"

He nodded. Then he shook hands with O'Leary—"So long, kid"—and hesitated, uncertain whether to shake hands with the rest of the staff. He settled for a little wave of the forefinger, and walked out to the street.

Finney lost no time giving us all the inside story in an eager whisper: "The guy's *crazy*! He says to Kramm, 'You take this column or I quit'—just like that. Kramm just looks at him and says, 'Quit? Get outa here, you're fired.' I mean, what *else* could he say?"

Turning away, I saw that the snapshot of Sobel's wife and sons still lay taped to his desk. I stripped it off and took it out to the sidewalk. "Hey, Sobel!" I yelled. He was a block away, very small, walking toward the subway. I started to run after him, nearly breaking my neck on the frozen slush. "Hey, *Sobel!*" But he didn't hear me.

Back at the office I found his address in the Bronx telephone directory, put the picture in an envelope and dropped it in the mail, and I wish that were the end of the story.

But that afternoon I called up the editor of a hardware trade journal I had worked on before the war, who said he had no vacancies on his staff but might soon, and would be willing to interview Sobel if he wanted to drop in. It was a foolish idea: the wages there were even lower than on the *Leader*, and besides, it was a place for very young men whose fathers wanted them to learn the hardware business—Sobel would probably have been ruled out the minute he opened his mouth. But it seemed better than nothing, and as soon as I was out of the office that night I went to a phone booth and looked up Sobel's name again.

A woman's voice answered, but it wasn't the high, faint voice I'd expected. It was low and melodious—that was the first of my several surprises.

"Mrs. Sobel?" I asked, absurdly smiling into the mouthpiece. "Is Leon there?"

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She started to say "Just a minute" but changed it to "Who's calling, please? I'd rather not disturb him right now."

I told her my name and tried to explain about the hardware deal.

"I don't understand," she said. "What kind of a paper is it, exactly?"

"Well, it's a trade journal," I said. "It doesn't amount to much, I guess, but it's—*you* know, a pretty good little thing, of its kind."

"I see," she said. "And you want him to go in and apply for a job? Is that it?"

"Well I mean, if he *wants* to, is all," I said. I was beginning to sweat. It was impossible to reconcile the wan face in Sobel's snapshot with this serene, almost beautiful voice. "I just thought he might like to give it a try, is all."

"Well," she said, "just a minute, I'll ask him." She put down the phone, and I heard them talking in the background. Their words were muffled at first, but then I heard Sobel say, "Ah, I'll talk to him—I'll just say thanks for calling." And I heard her answer, with infinite tenderness, "No, honey, why should you? He doesn't deserve it."

"McCabe's all right," he said.

"No he's not," she told him, "or he'd have the decency to leave you alone. Let me do it. Please. I'll get rid of him."

When she came back to the phone she said, "No, my husband says he wouldn't be interested in a job of that kind." Then she thanked me politely, said goodbye, and left me to climb guilty and sweating out of the phone booth.

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TWO POEMS
BY NICOLAS L. M. CROME

THE FOX HUNT

The way the hunt progressed, I thought
The fox would hound me in my sleep,
The way he carved the bottom land
And tortured the rough autumn sod.
The path he travelled, like a cord
Dropped on a table by my hand
Dipped in and out a twisted creek
Like fishlines snarled and tangled fast,
Was leading on an eager boast
Of ugly people in a wood.

And sometimes, as the hunt went on
The hounds outfoxed their prey, and cut
Across the meager twining scent,
As a desperate traveller in distress
Tears through the bushes when the path is long
And reaches home by accident;
At last they caught his straining throat.
The hunters rested in the shade
And in their dismal mirth they made
The fox laugh at my shallowness.

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THE DAY THE GEESE GOT DRUNK

One day last summer, Huck and I unpenned
The flock of geese that rubbagged by the barn
And herded them along with our two calves
Down to the little pond beside the ferns
And watched them drink until I thought to send
Huck for pap's whiskey—to get them drunk for laughs.

We poured the crock's full gallon in the pond
And stirred it up with our bare feet and sat
Down on the bank to watch the outcome of
This joke of mine upon those silly fat
Waddlers, who soon were rolling in the fronds,
Hawking and belching, full of goosey love.

I swear we almost laughed our insides out;
Especially at those two in the grass,
Bargaining away like jews—to save their life;
Until the gander, lit up by this pass,
Bargained his last, and with a screechy shout
Went to, like Brown did with the parson's wife.

And he, like Brown, went at her from above;
And Mr. Parson's Wife as usual laughed,
And when aunt Sally hollered down for me,
There was old Mrs. Goose, after our calves;
And though the calves were unprepared for love,
The geese enjoyed the prank and so did we.

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I Live on Your Visits
Dorothy Parker
(2)

and, on consoles and desk and table, photographs of himself at two and a half and five and seven and nine, framed in broad mirror bands. Whenever his mother settled in a new domicile, and she removed often, those photographs were the first things out of the luggage. The boy hated them. He had had to pass his fifteenth birthday before his body had caught up with his head; there was that head, in those presentments of his former selves, that pale, enormous blob. Once he had asked his mother to put the pictures somewhere else - preferably some small, dark place that could be locked. But he had had the bad fortune to make his request on one of the occasions when she was given to weeping suddenly and long. So the photographs stood out on parade, with their frames twinkling away.

There were twinkings, too, to the silver top of the fat crystal cocktail shaker, but the liquid low within the crystal was pale and dull. There was no shine, either, to the glass his mother held. It was cloudy from the clutch of her hand, and on the inside there were oily dribbles of what it had contained.

His mother shut the door by which she had admitted him and followed him into the room. She looked at him with her head tilted to the side.

"Well, aren't you going to kiss me?" she said in a charming, wheedling voice, the voice of a little, little girl. "Aren't you, you beautiful big ox, you?"

"Sure," he said. He bent down toward her, but she stepped suddenly away. A sharp change came over her. She drew herself tall, with her shoulders back and her head flung high. Her upper lip lifted over her teeth, and her gaze came cold beneath

A manuscript page from a short story by Dorothy Parker. Copyright 1955 by The New Yorker Magazine Inc.

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THE ART OF FICTION XIII

DOROTHY PARKER

Dorothy Parker lives at present in a mid-town New York hotel. She shares her small apartment with a youthful poodle which has run of the place and has caused it to look, as Miss Parker says apologetically, somewhat 'Hogarthian': newspapers spread about the floor, picked lamb chops here and there, and a rubber doll—its throat torn from ear to ear—which Miss Parker lobs lefthanded from her chair into corners of the room for the poodle to retrieve—which it does, never tiring of the opportunity. The room is sparsely decorated, its one overpowering fixture being a large dog portrait, not of the poodle, but of a sheepdog owned by the author Philip Wylie and painted by his wife. The portrait indicates a dog of such size that in real life it must dwarf Miss Parker. She is a small woman, her voice gentle, her tone often apologetic.

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But occasionally, given the opportunity to comment on matters she feels strongly about, her voice rises almost harshly, her sentences punctuated with observations phrased with lethal force. Hers is still the wit which made her a legend as a member of the Algonquin's Round Table—a humor whose particular quality seems a coupling of a brilliant social commentary with a mind of devestating inventiveness. She seemed able to produce the well-turned phrase for any occasion. A friend remembers sitting next to her at the theatre when the news was announced of the death of the stolid Calvin Coolidge. "How do they know?" whispered Miss Parker.

Readers of this interview, however, will find that Miss Parker has only contempt for the eager reception accorded her wit. "Why it got so bad," she has said bitterly, "that they began to laugh before I opened my mouth." And she has a similar attitude disparaging her value as a serious writer.

But Miss Parker is her own worst critic. Her three books of poetry may have established her reputation as a master of light verse, but her short stories are essentially serious in tone—serious in that they reflect Miss Parker's own life which has been in many ways an unhappy one. "She has distilled," one commentator said of her, "her sorrow for the light quaffing of a flippant generation."

If the tone of her short stories is serious, so is her intent. Franklin P. Adams has described it in an introduction to her work: "Nobody can write such ironic things unless he has a deep sense of injustice—injustice to those members of the race who are the victims of the stupid, the pretentious and the hypocritical..."

* * *

INTERVIEWER

Your first job was on *Vogue*, wasn't it? How did you go about getting hired, and why *Vogue*?

PARKER

After my father died there wasn't any money. I had to work, you see and Mr. Crowninshield, God rest his soul, paid

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$12 for a small verse of mine and gave me a job at $10 a week. Well, I thought I was Edith Sitwell. I lived in a boarding-house at 103rd and Broadway, paying $8 a week for my room and two meals, breakfast and dinner. Thorne Smith was there, and another man. We used to sit around in the evening and talk. There was no money, but Jesus we had fun.

INTERVIEWER

What kind of work did you do at *Vogue*?

PARKER

I wrote captions. "This little pink dress will win you a beau," that sort of thing. Funny, they were plain women working at *Vogue*, not chic. They were decent, nice women—the nicest women I ever met—but they had no business on such a magazine. They wore funny little bonnets and in the pages of their magazine they virginized the models from tough babes into exquisite little loves. Now the editors are what they should be: all divorcees, and chic, a collection of Ilka Chases; the models are out of the mind of a Bram Stoker, and as for the caption writers—*my* old job—they're recommending mink covers at $75 apiece for the wooden ends of golf clubs"—for the friend who has everything." Civilization is coming to an end, you understand.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you change to *Vanity Fair*?

PARKER

Mr. Crowninshield wanted me to. Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Benchley—we always called each other by our last names—were there. Our office was across from the Hippodrome. The midgets would come out and frighten Mr. Sherwood. He was about seven feet tall and they were always sneaking up behind him and asking him how the weather was up there. "Walk down the street with me," he'd ask, and Mr. Benchley and I would leave our jobs and guide him down the street. I can't tell you, we had more fun. Both Mr. Benchley and I sub-

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scribed to two undertaking magazines: *The Casket* and *Sunnyside*. Steel yourself: *Sunnyside* had a joke column called "From Grave to Gay." I cut a picture out of one of them, in color, of how and where to inject embalming fluid, and had it hung over my desk until Mr. Crowninshield asked me if I could possibly take it down. Mr. Crowninshield was a lovely man, but puzzled. I must say we behaved extremely badly. Albert Lee, one of the editors, had a map over *his* desk with little flags on it to show where our troops were fighting during the first world war. Every day he would get the news and move the flags around. I was married, my husband was overseas, and since I didn't have anything better to do I'd get up half-an-hour early and go down and change his flags. Later on, Lee would come in, look at his map, and he'd get very serious about spies—shout, and spend his morning moving his little pins back into position.

INTERVIEWER

How long did you stay at *Vanity Fair*?

PARKER

Four years. I'd taken over the drama criticism from P. G. Wodehouse. Then I fixed three plays—one of them *Caesar's Wife*, with Billie Burke in it—and as a result I was fired.

INTERVIEWER

You *fixed* three plays?

PARKER

Well, *panned*. The plays closed and the producers, who were the big boys—Dillingham, Zeigfield, and Belasco—didn't like it, you know. *Vanity Fair* was a magazine of no opinion, but *I* had opinions. So I was fired. And Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Benchley resigned their jobs. It was all right for Mr. Sherwood, but Mr. Benchley had a family—two children. It was the greatest act of friendship I'd known. Mr. Benchley did a sign "Contributions for Miss Billie Burke" and on our way out we left it in the hall of *Vanity Fair*. We behaved very badly. We made ourselves discharge chevrons, and wore them.

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INTERVIEWER

Where did you all go after *Vanity Fair*?

PARKER

Mr. Sherwood became the motion-picture critic for the old *Life*. Mr. Benchley did the drama reviews. He and I had an office so tiny that an inch smaller and it would have been adultery. We had *Parkbench* for a cable address, but no one ever sent us one. It was so long ago—before you were a gleam in someone's eyes—that I doubt there *was* a cable.

INTERVIEWER

It's a popular supposition that there was much more communication between writers in the "twenties". The Round Table discussions in the Algonquin, for example.

PARKER

I wasn't there very often—it cost too much. Others went. Kaufman was there. I guess he was sort of funny. Mr. Benchley and Mr. Sherwood went when they had a nickel. Franklin P. Adams, whose column was widely read by people who wanted to write, would sit in occasionally. And Harold Ross, the *New Yorker* editor. He was a professional lunatic, but I don't know if he was a great man. He had a profound ignorance. On one of Mr. Benchley's manuscripts he wrote in the margin opposite "Andromache", "Who's he?" Mr. Benchley wrote back, "You keep out of this." The only one with stature who came to the Round Table was Heywood Broun.

INTERVIEWER

What was it about the "twenties" that inspired people like yourself and Broun?

PARKER

Gertrude Stein did us the most harm when she said, "You're all a lost generation." That got around to certain people and we all said, "Whee! We're lost." Perhaps it suddenly brought to us the sense of change. Or irresponsibility. But don't forget

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that though the people in the "twenties" seemed like flops, they weren't. Fitzgerald, the rest of them, reckless as they were, drinkers as they were, they worked damn hard and all the time.

INTERVIEWER

Did the lost generation attitude you speak of have a detrimental effect on your own work?

PARKER

Silly of me to blame it on dates, but so it happened to be. Dammit, it *was* the "twenties" and we had to be smarty. I *wanted* to be cute. That's the terrible thing. I should have had more sense.

INTERVIEWER

And during this time you were writing poems?

PARKER

My verses. I cannot say poems. Like everybody was then, I was following in the exquisite footsteps of Miss Millay, unhappily in my own horrible sneakers. My verses are no damn good. Let's face it, honey, my verse is terribly dated—as anything once fashionable is dreadful now. I gave it up knowing it wasn't getting any better, but nobody seemed to notice my magnificent gesture.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think your verse writing has been of any benefit to your prose?

PARKER

Franklin P. Adams once gave me a book of French verse forms and told me to copy their design, that by copying them I would get precision in prose. The men you imitate in verse influence your prose, and what I got out of it was precision, all I realize I've ever had in prose writing.

INTERVIEWER

How did you get started in writing?

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PARKER

I fell into writing, I suppose, being one of those awful children who wrote verses. I went to a convent in New York —The Blessed Sacrament. Convents do the same things progressive schools do, only they don't know it. They don't teach you how to read; you have to find out for yourself. At my convent we *did* have a textbook... one that devoted a page and a half to Adelaide Ann Proctor; but we couldn't read Dickens... he was vulgar, you know. But *I* read him and Thackeray, and I'm the one woman you'll ever know who's read every word of Charles Read, the author of *The Cloister and The Hearth*. But as for helping me in the outside world the convent taught me only that if you spit on a pencil eraser it will erase ink. And I remember the smell of oilcloth, the smell of nun's garb. I was fired from there, finally, for a lot of things, among them my insistence that the Immaculate Conception was spontaneous combustion.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever drawn from those years for story material?

PARKER

All those writers who write about their childhood; gentle God, if I wrote about mine you wouldn't sit in the same room with me.

INTERVIEWER

What, then, would you say is the source of most of your work?

PARKER

Need of money, dear.

INTERVIEWER

And besides that?

PARKER

It's easier to write about those you hate—just as it's easier to criticize a bad play or a bad book.

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INTERVIEWER

What about *Big Blonde*? Where did the idea for that come from?

PARKER

I knew a lady... a friend of mine who went through holy hell. Just say I knew a woman once. The purpose of the writer is to say what he feels and sees. To those who write fantasies—the Misses Baldwin, Ferber, Norris—I am not at home.

INTERVIEWER

That's not showing much respect for your fellow woman, at least not the writers.

PARKER

As artists they're rot, but as providers they're oil wells; they gush. Norris said she never wrote a story unless it was fun to do. I understand Ferber whistles at her typewriter. And there was that poor sucker Flaubert rolling around on his floor for three days looking for the right word. I'm a feminist, and God knows I'm loyal to my sex, but you must remember that from my very early days when this city was scarcely safe from buffaloes I was in the struggle for equal rights for women. But when we paraded through the catcalls of men and when we chained ourselves to lamp posts to try to get our equality —dear child, we didn't foresee *those* female writers. Or Clare Boothe Luce, or Perle Mesta, or Oveta Culp Hobby.

INTERVIEWER

You have an extensive reputation as a wit. Has this interfered, do you think, with your acceptance as a serious writer?

PARKER

I don't want to be classed as a humorist. It makes me feel guilty. I've never read a good tough quotable female humorist and I never was one myself. I couldn't do it. A "smart-cracker" they called me, and that makes me sick and unhappy. There's a helluva distance between wise-cracking and wit.

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Wit has truth in it; wise-cracking is simply callisthenics with words. I didn't mind so much when they were good but for a long time anything that was called a crack was attributed to me... and then they got the shaggy dogs.

INTERVIEWER

How about satire?

PARKER

Ah, satire. That's another matter. They're the big boys. If I'd been called a satirist there'd be no living with me. But by satirist I mean those boys in the other centuries. The people we call satirists now are those who make cracks at topical topics and consider themselves satirists—creatures like George S. Kaufman and such who don't even who know what satire is. Lord knows, a writer should show his times, but not show them in wisecracks. Their stuff is not satire; it's as dull as yesterday's newspaper. Successful satire has got to be pretty good the day after tomorrow.

INTERVIEWER

And how about contemporary humorists? Do you feel about them as you do about satirists?

PARKER

You get to a certain age and only the tried writers are funny. I read my verses now and I ain't funny. I haven't been funny for 20 years. But anyway there aren't any humorists anymore, except for Perelman. There's no need for them. Perelman must be very lonely.

INTERVIEWER

Why is there no need for the humorist?

PARKER

It's a question of supply and demand. If we needed them, we'd have them. The new crop of would-be humorists doesn't count. They're like the would-be satirists. They write about

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topical topics. Not like Thurber and Mr. Benchley. Those two were damn well-read and though I hate the word—they were cultured. What sets them apart is that they both had a point of view to express. That is important to all good writing. It's the difference between Paddy Chayefsky, who just puts down lines, and Clifford Odets who in his early plays not only sees but has a point of view. The writer must be aware of life around him. Carson McCullers is good, or she used to be, but now she's withdrawn from life and writes about freaks. Her characters are grotesques.

INTERVIEWER

Speaking of Chayefsky and McCullers, do you read much of your own, or the present generation of writers?

PARKER

I will say of the writers of today that some of them, thank God, have the sense to adapt to their times. Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* is a great book. And I thought William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* an extraordinary thing. The start of it took your heart and flung it over there. He writes like a god. But for the most of my reading I go back to the old ones—for comfort. As you get older you go much farther back. I read *Vanity Fair* about a dozen times a year. I was a woman of eleven when I first read it... the thrill of that line "George Osborne lay dead with a bullet through his head." Sometimes I read, as an elegant friend of mine calls them, "who-did-its". I love Sherlock Holmes. My life is so untidy and he's so neat. But as for living novelists I suppose E. M. Forster is the best, not knowing what that is, but at least he's a semi-finalist, wouldn't you think? Somerset Maugham once said to me, "We have a novelist over here, E. M. Forster, though I don't suppose he's familiar to you." Well, I could have kicked him. Did he think I carried a papoose on my back? Why I'd go on my hands and knees to get to Forster. He once wrote something I've always remembered: "It has never happened to me that I've had to choose between betraying a friend and betraying my country, but if it ever does so

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happen I hope I have the guts to betray my country." Now doesn't that make the Fifth Amendment look like a bum.

INTERVIEWER

Could I ask you some technical questions? How do you actually write out a story? Do you write out a draft and then go over it or what?

PARKER

It takes me six months to do a story. I think it out and then write it sentence by sentence—no first draft. I can't write five words but that I change seven.

INTERVIEWER

How do you name your characters?

PARKER

The telephone book and from the obituary columns.

INTERVIEWER

Do you keep a notebook?

PARKER

I tried to keep one, but I never could remember where I put the damn thing. I always say I'm going to keep one tomorrow.

INTERVIEWER

How do you get the story down on paper?

PARKER

I wrote in longhand at first, but I've lost it. I use two fingers on the typewriter. I think it's unkind of you to ask. I know so little about the typewriter that once I bought a new one because I couldn't change the ribbon on the one I had.

INTERVIEWER

You're working on a play now, aren't you?

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PARKER

Yes, collaborating with Arnaud D'Usseau. I'd like to do a play more than anything. First night is the most exciting thing in the world. It's wonderful to hear your words spoken. Unhappily, our first play, *The Ladies of the Corridor*, was not a success, but writing that play was the best time I ever had,both for the privilege and the stimulation of working with Mr. D'Usseau and because that play was the only thing I have ever done in which I had great pride.

INTERVIEWER

How about the novel? Have you ever tried that form?

PARKER

I wish to God I could do one, but I haven't got the nerve.

INTERVIEWER

And short stories? Are you still doing them?

PARKER

I'm trying now to do a story that's purely narrative. I think narrative stories are the best, though my past stories make themselves stories by telling themselves through what people say. I haven't got a visual mind. I hear things. But I'm not going to do those *he-said she-said* things any more, they're over, honey, they're over. I want to do the story that can only be told in the narrative form, and though they're going to scream about the rent, I'm going to do it.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think economic security an advantage to the writer?

PARKER

Yes. Being in a garret doesn't do you any good unless you're some sort of a Keats. The people who lived and wrote well in the 20's were comfortable and easy-living. They were able to find stories and novels, and good ones, in conflicts that came out of two million dollars a year, not a garret. As for me,

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I'd like to have money. And I'd like to be a good writer. These two can come together, and I hope they will, but if that's too adorable, I'd rather have money. I hate almost all rich people, but I think I'd be darling at it. At the moment, however, I like to think of Maurice Baring's remark: "If you would know what the Lord God thinks of money, you have only to look at those to whom he gives it." I realize that's not much help when the wolf comes scratching at the door, but it's a comfort.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think about the artist being supported by the state?

PARKER

Naturally, when penniless I think it's superb. I think that the art of the country so immeasurably adds to its prestige that if you want the country to have writers and artists—persons who live precariously in our country—the state must help. I do not think that any kind of artist thrives under charity, by which I mean one person or organization giving him money. Here and there, this and that... that's no good. The difference between the state giving and the individual patron is that one is charity and the other isn't. Charity is murder and you know it. But I do think that if the government supports its artists, they need have no feeling of gratitude—the meanest and most sniveling attribute in the world—or baskets being brought to them, or applepolishing. Working for the state—for Christ's sake are you grateful to your employers? Let the state see what its artists are trying to do—like France with the Academie Française. The artists are a part of their country and their country should recognize this, so both it and the artists can take pride in their efforts. Now I mean that, my dear.

INTERVIEWER

How about Hollywood as provider for the artist?

PARKER

Hollywood money isn't money. It's congealed snow, melts

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in your hand, and there you are. I can't talk about Hollywood. It was a horror to me when I was there and it's a horror to look back on. I can't imagine how I did it. When I got away from it I couldn't even refer to the place by name. "Out there" I called it. You want to know what "out there" means to me? Once I was coming down a street in Beverly Hills and I saw a Cadillac about a block long and out of the side window was a wonderfully slinky mink, and an arm, and at the end of the arm a hand in a white suede glove wrinkled around the wrist, and in the hand was a bagel with a bite out of it.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think Hollywood destroys the artist's talent?

PARKER

No, no, no... I think nobody on earth writes down. Garbage though they turn out, Hollywood writers aren't writing down. That is their best. If you're going to write, don't pretend to write down. It's going to be the best you can do, and it's the fact that it's the best you can do that kills you. I want so much to write well, though I know I don't, and that I didn't make it. But during, and at the end of my life, I will adore those who have.

INTERVIEWER

Then what is it that's the evil in Hollywood?

PARKER

It's the people. Like the director who put his finger in Scott Fitzgerald's face and complained, "Pay *you*. Why you ought to pay us." It was terrible about Scott; if you'd seen him you'd have been sick. When he died no one went to the funeral, not a single soul came, or even sent a flower. I said, "Poor son of a bitch," a quote right out of *The Great Gatsby*, and everyone thought it was another wise-crack. But it was said in dead seriousness. Sickening about Scott. And it wasn't only the people, but also the indignity to which your ability was put. There was a picture in which Mr. Benchley had a part. In it

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Monty Woolley had a scene in which he had to enter a room through a door on which was balanced a bucket of water. He came into the room covered with water and muttered to Mr. Benchley, who had a part in the scene, "Benchley? Benchley of *Harvard*?" "Yes," mumbled Mr. Benchley and he asked: "Woolley? Woolley of *Yale*?"

INTERVIEWER

How about your political views? Have they made any difference to you professionally?

PARKER

Oh certainly. Though I don't think this "blacklist" business extends to the theatre or certain of the magazines, in Hollywood it exists because several gentlemen felt it best to drop names like marbles which bounced back like rubber balls about people they'd seen in the company of what they charmingly called "commies". You can't go back thirty years to Sacco and Vanzetti. I won't do it. Well, well, well, that's the way it is. If all this means something to the good of the movies, I don't know what it is. Sam Goldwyn said, "How'm I gonna do decent pictures when all my good writers are in jail?" Then he added, the infallible Goldwyn, "Don't misunderstand me, they all ought to be hung." Mr. Goldwyn didn't know about "hanged". That's all there is to say. It's not the tragedies that kill us, it's the messes. I can't stand messes. I'm not being a smartcracker. You know I'm not when you meet me... don't you, honey?

—MARION CAPRON

(*This is the twelfth in a series on the Art of Fiction. Authors interviewed have included E. M. Forster, François Mauriac, Graham Greene, William Styron, Irwin Shaw, Alberto Moravia, Joyce Cary, Ralph Ellison, Georges Simenon, James Thurber, Nelson Algren and William Faulkner.*)

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AN IDYL IN IDLENESS

"So many unlived lives," she said; and idle
As gulls in their sleepy drift, a hot and somber
Autumn day in umber, we talked of things
Beyond the fountains of the moon, and walked
Without a place to go, for we were free—
Within the shadow of a prophecy.

"Those marriages of flesh and dream that stand
Before no altar of reality
Have consummation only in a wish.
And what of you and me who drink from springs
Whose waters never cloy but drown all sense
Of urgency? We walk and watch the river
And the days, and lean an ear to find
A messages in the mumbling of the wind."

Idle as morning and the putting-on of clothes,
Idle as noon with thoughts that never reach
The empty page, languid as shapeless night
In meditations flying up among
The stars and sinking, past forgetfulness,
In dreams—we saw the squirrels and the children
On the lawns for whom not games, but real
Tears alone, are strange; the water's cargo
Of monotony, we saw, a bench,
A tramp who rose and went, the chasing cop—
All flashed vivid as figures on a screen,
But who could know that there was life within?

"If consciousness is freedom," she declared,
"What words can wed us to the scene and make
Us touch one common world, comfort our wandering
Senses with some certainty, that we
May know this world as home, and come to know
Fulfillment from desire, and learn to see
That love is no phantom of infirmity?"

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No flowers gathered at this invocation
To a glory in the sun, no light
Leaped up in hallelujahs of belief,
And we must sing until our fevered longing
Fills those empty fields and hollow skies.
But idleness of heart returns when we
Recall that only possibility
Fills out the cadence of incompleted song,
And that our longing decorates the sky
With forms that live not, for they do not die.

"We bear what dying life we can," she said,
"And I still weep my childhood tears and dwell
Upon old fantasies through which you change
To be my many worshippers, coming
Down a holy clouded way to bless
Me through the ages of my loneliness."

The gulls came round again and lost a feather
To the wind which, drifting, drew a graph
Of choice, and entered in the simple meaning
Of the sea... I tremble at the terror
Of the law, of facing, for it is our fate,
Its full monstrosity of rage, and fear
To find all suffering in just a doubt;
Yet what is this to standing in the shadow
Of the grave?... I turned and would have touched her
Though it cost me all life long,
But she was that moment vanishing,
And something in our flesh was wrong.

—ROBERT PACK

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A DISCIPLINE OF ZENITH DEEP AS LIFE

You who have been to Venezuela, sailed
the Orinoco in a paddle-boat,
the Lagoon of Maracaibo by canoe,
discovering the far recesses of
flamingo sanctuaries in the reeds,
the thickets and the marshes where the bays
color at twilight to the jungle shore
as if Orozco spattered on the floor
the brilliant sables and the pots of ore
that leaked into the oceans from his door;

you who have heard the capital pronounced
in Spanish from the beaches and the ports
swarming the rinds the Gulf of Mexico
and Indies offer like a fruit to flies,
and who have heard the sound beyond the word,
Caracas like a clicking from their throats,
a beetle in the larynx of a bird;
who have stirred a summer mango in your rum
the while pineapple palms preferred to hum
blue madrigals of evening to the sun:

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is it a place of faring-forth for me,
a space of spare sufficiency of sea
and crucial jungle rare enough to be
that windfall of a landfall of deep coast.
Is it those weathers of that legacy
in girth and breath and birth awaiting me,
darker by sun and sharper in one's sight,
purer of speech and surer through the hands:
a strict flamboyancy, a bitter red,
a brilliant body and a boldest head.

You who have seen that Venezuela, sailed
whatever water's flicker to be there,
or breathed whichever land-route's foreign air,
what is the direction but the one I know:
whip bone and blood to sail-bright for the blow;
endure a further crossing late tonight;
attempt another working of the light;
steer southerly and sultry to within
the zone of all the sea's gold origin,
that south-by-south of one's Caribbean.

—HERBERT MORRIS

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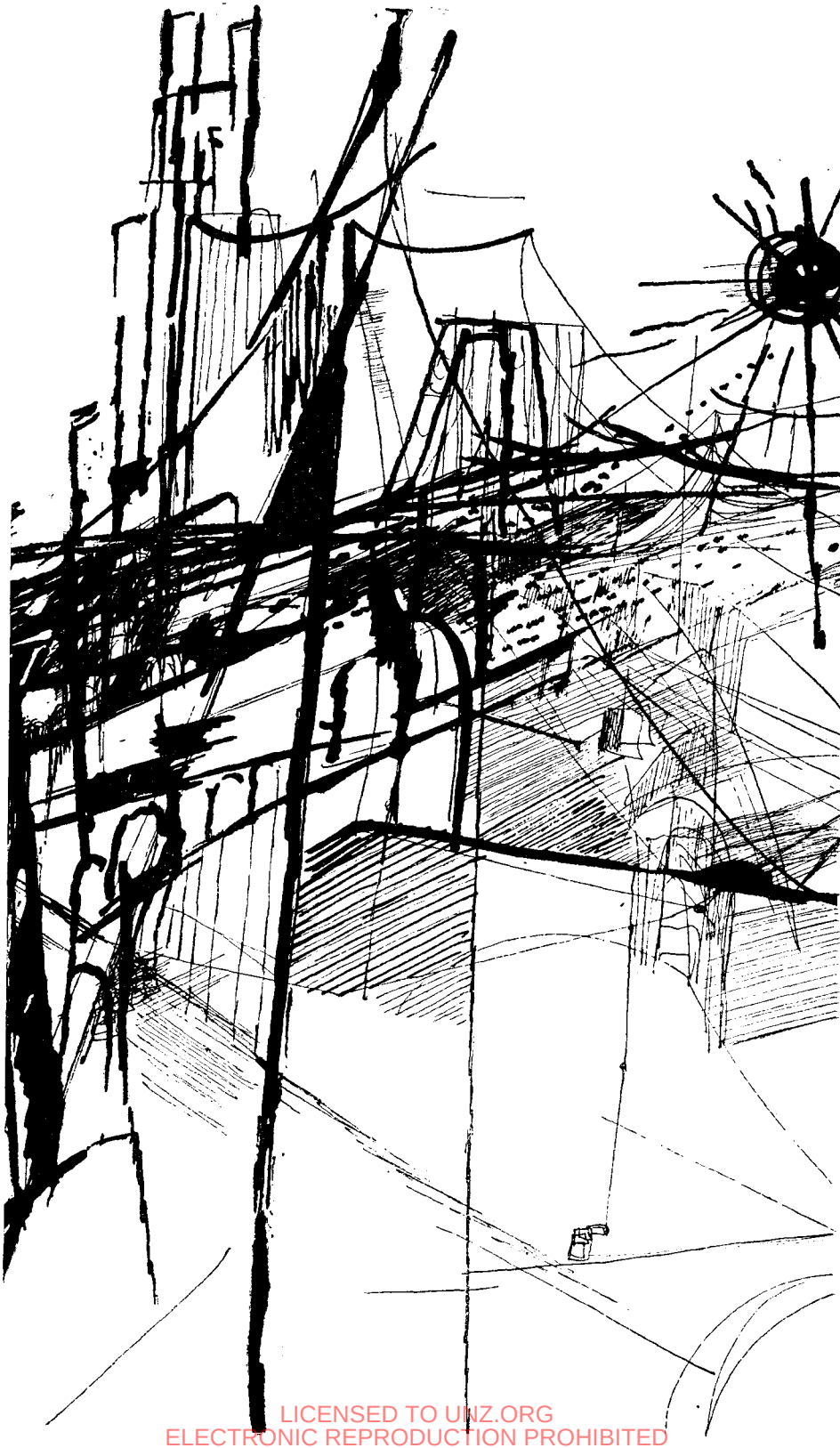

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Anita de Caro

ANITA DE CARO is at home in either New York or Paris and yet she is a stranger to both of them in that their conventional sights and views—those that the tourist sees most easily—continue to suprise and delight her. Last year she rereturned to her native New York for a joint exhibition with Jacques Villon at the Grace Borgonicht Gallery. Her reaction to the city's skyscrapers and bridges is reflected in some of the drawings reproduced on these pages. Her feeling for the slow waters of the Seine along which she lives, opposite the Ile St. Louis and Notre Dame on the left bank, is apparent in others. She studied in New York at the Art Student's League and with Hans Hoffman and Max Weber, and later worked at Hans Heye's Atelier 17 in Zurich. In 1937 she married the famous French engraver Roger Vieillard and she has since lived and worked in Paris. One of her paintings is in the permanent collection of the Paris Musée d'Art Moderne.

Gerald Sykes, the novelist and critic, has written of her work: "There is a kind of calm in her painting that one feels near a deserted French canal, where the most important event of the day is the dropping of a few leaves into brown water. The colors are bright but chaste. Here is classic contentment, the kind that is within reach of us all if we will stop and let it come in."

—B. F.

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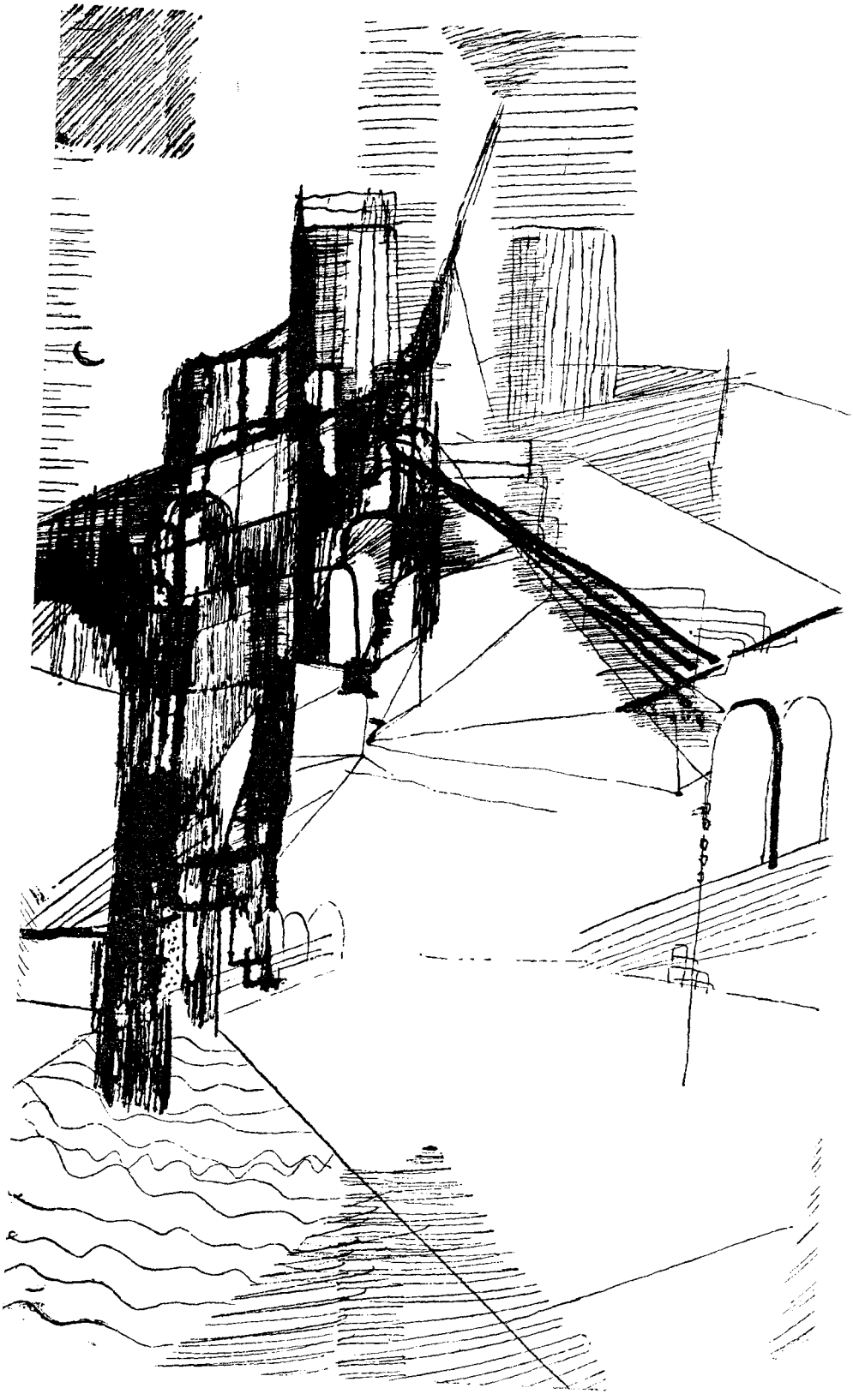

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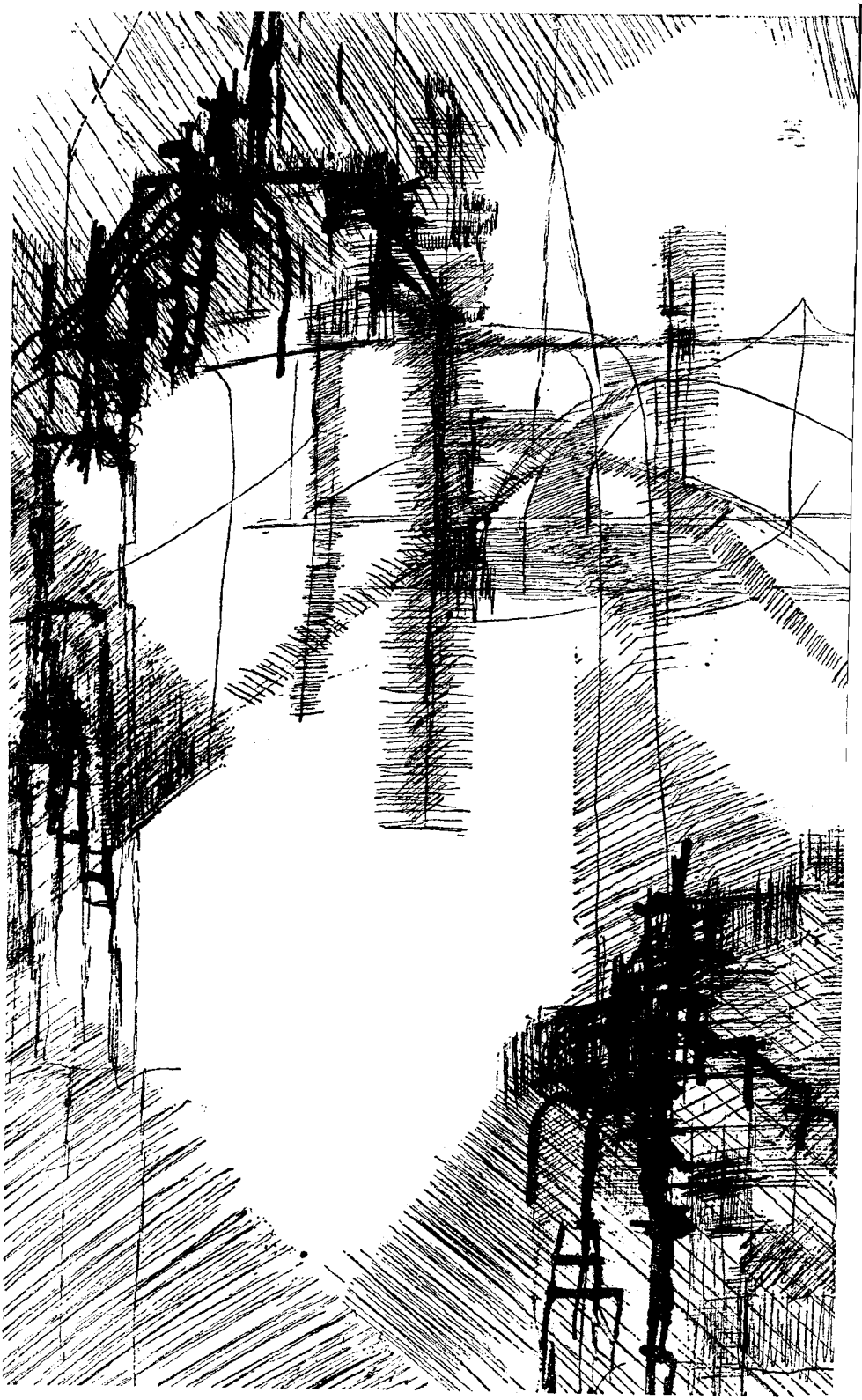

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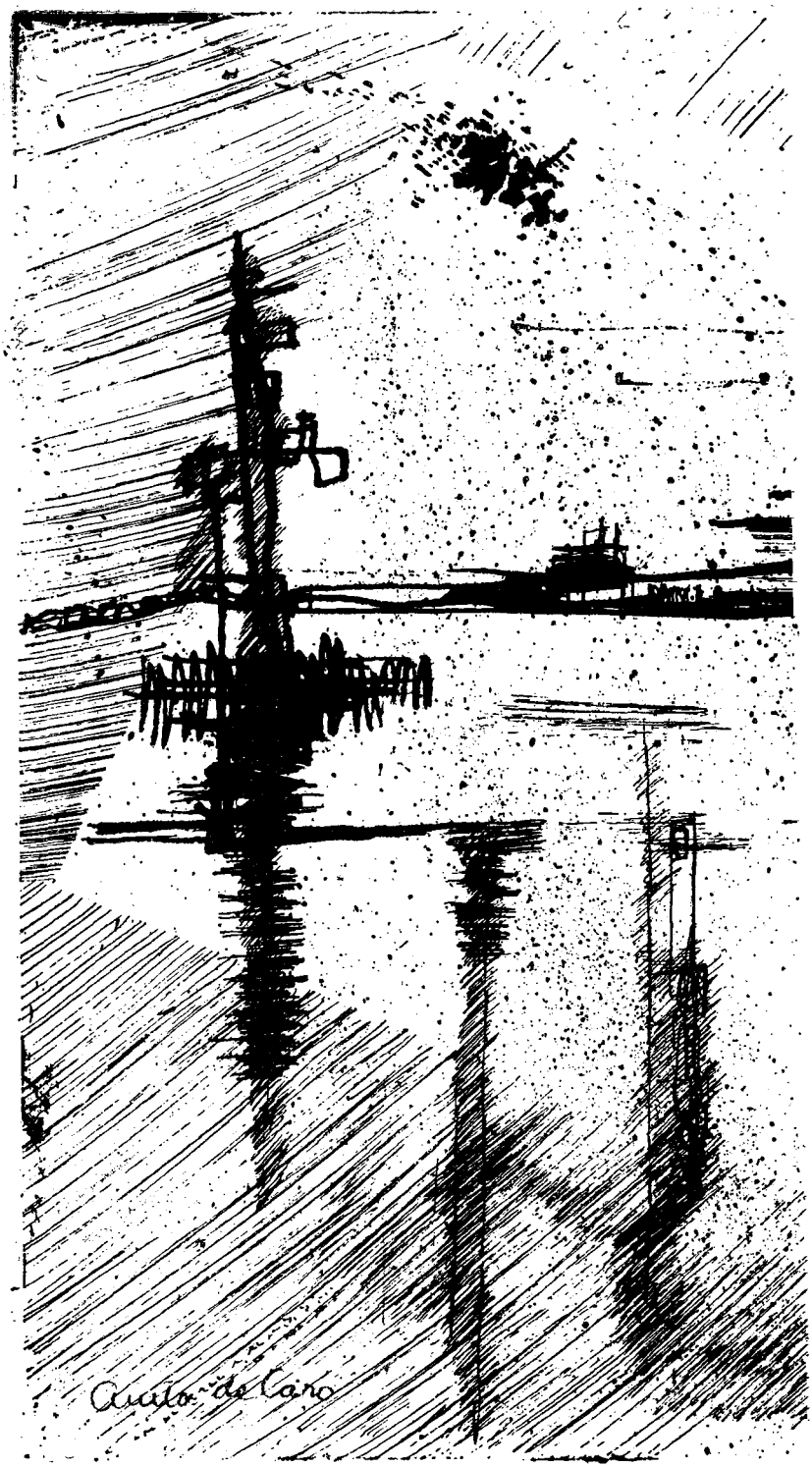

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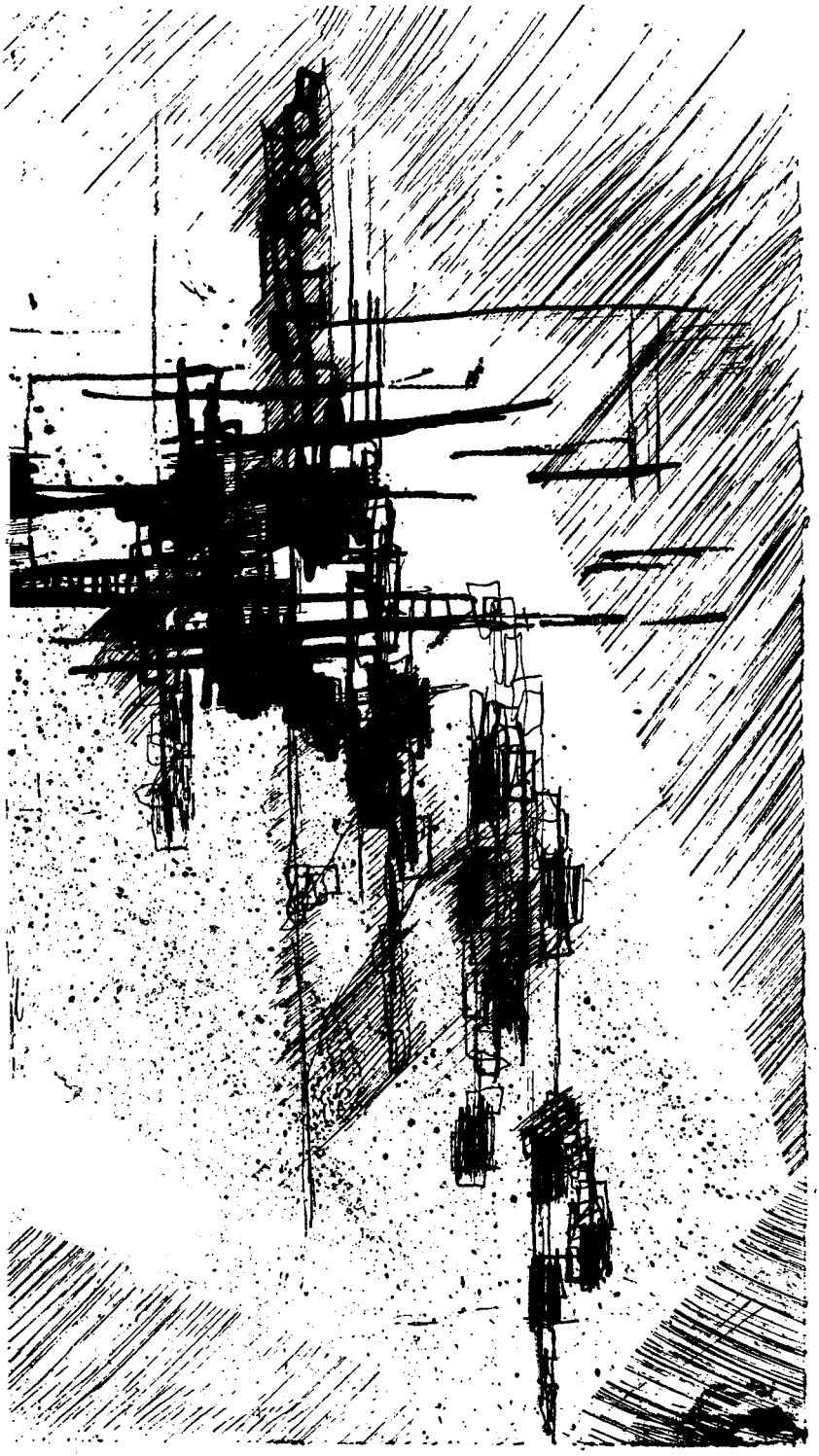

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THREE POEMS
BY DAVID FERRY

ELEGIAC

The lovers lie in trouble in the park.
The cold fall draws the leaves to earth around them.
Good angels of these lovers, come, surround them,
Be as if summer foliage in the dark

Gathered about them, guarding them from all harms.
Hot ignorant lovers, they don't know how they are taken
Far from the summer sun, out of their season.
They burn in the brightness, each of the other's arms.

Thinking of them, I think of my own death coming,
When I shall seasonless lie in the unloving earth,
And of the deaths of all others, as of the death
Of these lovers, locked in the ice, and burning:

Persisting in bliss, all lovers are coming to ill,
And by their heat they have caught this mortal chill.

ON THE WAY TO THE ISLAND

After we fled away from the shuddering dock,
The sea upheld us, would not let us go
Nor drown us, and we danced all night in the dark,
Till we woke to discover the deck was made of glass,
All glass, and, leaning together, we lovers looked down,
Say a hundred miles, say a million years, and there
Were the fish, huge, munching, graceless, flashing
Their innocent frightening scales in the dark!

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My lady wears brilliants in her hair, and the sun
Makes their fakery sparkle, so beautiful
Is she my lady, so pitiful is she,
Her white arms so naked after those scales,
Her coquetry pretty after those monsters,
Beginning her history there in the deep dark.
My lady, I love you because of the dark
Over which your glass slippers so ignorantly danced!

THE GOOD MAN

The good man went his way in personal freedom;
His body shone as if by his consent;
He had no king, and was himself his kingdom;
He was both just and kind in government.

His gesture made of air a form and figure;
His voice made leaves speak stanzas in his praise;
He praised the leaves, and everything in nature;
Majestic was his mien, charming his ways.

When he laughed loud, the mountains held their sides;
When he wept soft the wind hung on the meadow;
Obedient was the moon, cheerful the tides;
There was no danger, not in any shadow.

There was no good man, though we thought of him;
Yet everything came true because of him.

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BELLE GROVE

This is the house the South built.
This is the mouse that gnawed at the house
The South built. This is the cat
That clawed the mouse that gnawed the house the South

Built. This is the stick, this the fire,
This the water, and this the man
Who went to the city and would not die
In the house the South built. Beyond

Nonsense and sentiment its elemental ruins
Lie interchangeably. Dear ladies of clichés
(Les dames aux magnoliers), choice gallants
Of the inflexible code and the flexible wrist,

Made an edifice of grace, great porticos
Of charm, faulty pediments of honor:
Perpetrated the architecture of paranoia.
But Jeannie was dishonored by a Yankee zephyr,

And Dinah Lou became a movie star.
Some rioted and some went north to school,
And some trafficked in manufactured souvenirs.
What hardly existed, became usual—

The fundamental became hard to find.
Soiled by flukes and fallacies,
Circumscribed by mortgages of fixed
Ideas, this became fabrication's parish,

At the confluence of flow and ebb,
In a delta of the subtly dissatisfied,
Whose causes and nightblooming chimeras died.
This is the South the house built.

These are the mice that gnawed at the South
The house built. These are the cats,
The sticks, the fires, the waters, that flaw
The impossible South the house built.

—MARVIN SOLOMON

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NADINE GORDIMER

FACE FROM ATLANTIS

SOMEHOW it wasn't altogether a surprise when Waldeck Brand and his wife bumped into Carlitta at a theater in New York in 1953. The Brands were six thousand miles away from their home in South Africa, and everywhere they had visited in England and Europe before they came to America they had met Waldeck's contemporaries from Heidelberg whom he hadn't seen for twenty years and never had expected to see ever again. It had seemed a miracle to Waldeck that all these people, who had had to leave Germany because they were liberals (like himself), or Jews, or both, not only had survived transplantation but had thrived, and not only had thrived but had managed to do so each in the manner and custom of the country which had given him sanctuary.

Of course, Waldeck Brand did not think it a miracle that *he* had survived and conformed to a pattern of life lived at the other end of the world to which he had belonged. (Perhaps it is true, after all, that no man can believe in the possibility of his own failure or death.) It seemed quite natural that the gay young man destined primarily for a good time and, secondly, for the inheritance of his wealthy father's publishing house in Berlin should have become a director of an important group of gold mines in southernmost Africa, a world away from medieval German university towns where he had marched at the head of the student socialist group, and the Swiss Alps where he had skied and shared his log cabin with a different free-thinking girl every winter, and the Kurfürstendamm where he had strolled with his friends, wearing elegant clothes specially ordered from England. Yet

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to him—and to his South African wife, who had been born and had spent the twenty-seven years of her life in Cape Town, looking out, often and often, over the sea which she had now crossed for the first time—it was a small miracle that his Heidelberg friend, Siggie Bentheim, was to be found at the foreign editor's desk of a famous right-of-center newspaper in London, and another university friend, Stefan Rosovsky, now become Stefan Raines, was president of a public-utility company in New York and had a finger or two dipped comfortably in oil, too. To Waldeck, Siggie was the leader of a Communist cell, an ugly little chap, best student in the *Institut für Sozialwissenschaften*, whose tiny hands were dry-skinned and shrunken, as if political fervor had used up his blood like fuel. Stefan was the soulfuleyed Russian boy with the soft voice and the calm delivery of dry wit who tutored in economics and obviously was fitted for nothing but an academic career as an economist.

And to Eileen, Waldeck Brand's wife, both were people who lived, changeless, young, enviable, in a world that existed only in Waldeck's three green leather photograph albums. Siggie was the one who sat reading the *Arbeiterpolitik*, oblivious of the fact that a picture was being taken, in the photograph where a whole dim, underexposed room (Waldeck's at Heidelberg) was full of students. Eileen had been to a university in South Africa, but she had never seen students like that: such good-looking, happy, bold-eyed boys, such beautiful girls, smoking cigarettes in long holders and stretching out their legs in pointed-toed shoes beneath their short skirts. Someone was playing a guitar in that picture. But Siggie Bentheim (you could notice those hands, around the edges of the pages) read a paper.

Stefan was not in that picture, but in dozens of others. In particular, there was one taken in Budapest. A flashlight picture, taken in a night club. Stefan holds up a glass of champagne, resigned in his dinner suit, dignified in a silly paper cap. New Year's in Budapest, before Hitler, before the war. Can you imagine it? Eileen was fascinated by those photograph albums and those faces. Since she had met and

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married Waldeck in 1952, she had spent many hours looking at the albums. When she did so, a great yawning envy opened through her whole body. She was young, and the people pictured in those albums were all, even if they were alive, over forty by now. But that did not matter; that did not count. That world of the photograph albums was not lost only by those who had outgrown it into middle age. It was *lost*. Gone. It did not belong to a new youth. It was not hers, although she was young. It was *no use* being young, now, in the forties and fifties. She thought of the green albums as the record of an Atlantis.

Waldeck had never been back to Europe since he came as a refugee to South Africa twenty years before. He had not kept up a regular correspondence with his scattered student friends, though one or two had written, at intervals of four or five years, and so for some, when Waldeck took his wife to Europe and America, he had the address-before-the-last, and for others the vaguest ideas of their whereabouts. Yet he found them all, or they found him. It was astonishing. The letters he wrote to old addresses were forwarded; the friends whom he saw knew where other friends lived, or at least what jobs they were doing, so that they could be traced that way, simply by a telephone call. In London there were dinner parties and plain drinking parties, and there they were—the faces from Atlantis, gathered together in a Strand pub. One of the women was a grandmother; most of the men were no longer married to women Waldeck remembered them marrying, and had shed their old political faiths along with their hair. But all were alive, and living variously, and in them was still the peculiar vigor that showed vividly in those faces, caught in the act of life long ago, in the photograph albums.

Once or twice in London, Waldeck had asked one old friend or another, "What happened to Carlitta? Does anyone know where Carlitta is?" Siggie Bentheim, eating Scotch salmon at Rules', like any other English journalist who can afford to, couldn't remember Carlitta. Who was she? Then Waldeck remembered that the year when everyone got to know Carlitta was the year that Siggie spent in Lausanne.

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Another old friend remembered her very well. "Carlitta! Not in England, at any rate. Carlitta!"

Someone else caught the name, and called across the table, "Carlitta was in London, oh, before the war. She went to America thirteen or fourteen years ago."

"Did she ever marry poor old Klaus Schultz? My God, he was mad about that girl!"

"Marry him! No-o-o! Carlitta wouldn't marry him."

"Carlitta was a collector of scalps, all right," said Waldeck, laughing.

"Well, do you wonder?" said the friend.

Eileen knew Carlitta well, in picture and anecdote. Eileen had a favorite among the photographs of her, too, just as she had the one of Stefan in Budapest on New Year's Eve. The photograph was taken in Austria, on one of Waldeck's skiing holidays. It was a clear print and the snow was blindingly white. In the middle of the whiteness stood a young girl, laughing away from the camera in the direction of something or someone outside the picture. Her little face, burnished by the sun, shone dark against the snow. There was a highlight on each firm, round cheekbone, accentuated in laughter. She was beautiful in the pictures of groups, too—in boats on the Neckar, in the gardens of the *Schloss*, in cafés and at student dances; even, once, at Deauville, even in the unbecoming bathing dress of the time. In none of the pictures did she face the camera. If, as in the ski picture, she was smiling, it was at someone in the group, and if she was not, her black pensive eyes, her beautiful little firm-fleshed face with the short chin, stared at the toes of her shoes, or at the smoke of her cigarette, arrested in its climbing arabesque by the click of the camera. The total impression of all these photographs of the young German girl was one of arrogance. She did not participate in the taking of a photograph; she was simply there, a thing of beauty which you could attempt to record if you wished.

One of the anecdotes about the girl was something that had happened on that skiing holiday. Carlitta and Klaus Schultz, Waldeck and one of his girls had gone together to

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the mountains. ("Oh, the luck of it!" Eileen had said to Waldeck at this point in his story, the first time he related it. "You were eighteen? Nineteen? And you were allowed to go off on your first love affair to the mountains. Can you imagine what would have happened if I had announced to my parents that I was going off on a holiday with a young lover? And in Austria, and skiing..." Poor Eileen, who had gone, every year, on a five-day cruise along the coast to stay at a "family hotel" in Durban, accompanied by her parents and young brother and sister, or had been sent, in the winter vacation, with an uncle and cousins to hear the lions roar outside a dusty camp in the Kruger Park. She did not know which to envy Waldeck, Carlitta, and Klaus most—the sexual freedom or the steep mountain snows.) Anyway, it was on the one really long and arduous climb of that delightful holiday that Carlitta, who for some hours had been less talkative than usual and had fallen back a little, sat down in the snow and refused to move. Waldeck had lagged behind the rest of the party to mend a broken strap on his rucksack, and so it was that he noticed her. When he asked her why she did not hurry on with him to catch up with the other members of the party, she said, perfectly calm, "I want to sit here in the shade and rest. I'll wait here till you all come back."

There was no shade. The party intended to sleep in a rest hut up the mountain, and would not pass that way again till next day. At first Waldeck laughed; Carlitta was famous for her gaiety and caprice. Then he saw that in addition to being perfectly calm, Carlitta was also perfectly serious. She was not joking, but suffering from some kind of peculiar hysteria. He begged and begged her to get up, but she would not. "I am going to rest in the shade" was all she would answer. The rest of the party was out of sight and he began to feel nervous. There was only one thing he could try. He went up kindly to the beautiful little girl and struck her sharply, twice, in the face. The small head swung violently this way, then that. Carlitta got up, dusted the snow from her trousers, and said to Waldeck, "For God's sake, what are we waiting for? The others must be miles ahead."

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"And when Klaus heard what had happened," Waldeck's story always ended, "he could scarcely keep himself from crying, he was so angry that *he* had not been the one to revive Carlitta, and Carlitta saw his nose pinken and swell slightly with the effort of keeping back the tears, and she noted how very much he must be in love with her and how easy it would be to torment him."

Wretched Klaus! He was the blond boy with the square jaw who always frowned and smiled directly into the camera. Eileen had a theory that young people didn't even fall in lovelike that any more. That, too, had gone down under the waves.

WALDECK and his young wife arrived in New York on a Tuesday. Stefan Raines came to take them out to dinner that very first night. Eileen, who had never seen him before in her life, was even more overjoyed than Waldeck to find that he had not changed. As soon as they came out of the elevator and saw him standing in the hotel lobby with a muffler hanging down untied on the lapels of his dark coat, they knew he had not changed. He wore the presidency of the public-utility company, the wealth and the Fifth Avenue apartment just as he had worn the paper cap in the Budapest night club on New Year's Eve long ago. Stefan's American wife was not able to accompany them that night, so the three dined alone at the Pierre. After dinner Stefan wanted to know if he should drive them to Times Square and along Broadway or anywhere else they'd read about, but they told him that he was the only sight they wanted to see so soon after their arrival. They talked for two hours over dinner, Stefan asking and Waldeck answering eager questions about the old Heidelberg friends whom Waldeck and Eileen had seen in London. Stefan went to London sometimes, and he had seen one or two, but many whom he hadn't been able to find for years seemed to have appeared out of their hiding places for Waldeck. In fact, there were several old Berlin and Heidelberg friends living in New York whom Stefan had seen once, or not at all, but who, on the Brands' first day

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in New York, had already telephoned their hotel. "We love Waldeck. Better than we love each other," said Stefan to his friend's wife, his black eyes looking quietly out over the room, the corners of his mouth indenting in his serious smile that took a long time to open out, brightening his eyes as i did until they shone like the dark water beneath a lamplight on a Venetian canal where Eileen had stood with her husband a few weeks before.

Eileen seemed to feel her blood warm in the palms of her hands, as if some balm had been poured over them. No man in South Africa could say a thing like that! The right thing, the thing from the heart. You had to have the assurance of Europe, of an old world of civilized human relationships behind you before you could say, simply and truthfully, a thing like that.

It was the moment for the mood of the conversation to take a turn. Waldeck said curiously, suddenly remembering, "and what ever became of Carlitta? Did you ever see Carlitta? Peter told me, in London, that she had come to live in America."

"Now that's interesting that you should ask," said Stefan: "I've wondered about her, too. I saw her once, twelve—more—thirteen years back. When first she arrived in America. She was staying quite near the hotel where you're living now. I took her out to lunch—not very sumptuous; I was rather poor at the time—and I never saw her again. She was beautiful. You remember? She was always beautiful—" he crinkled his eyes to dark slits, as if to narrow down the aperture of memory upon her—"even in a bad restaurant in New York, she was—well, the word my son would use is the best for her—she was terrific. Minute and terrific."

"That's it. That's it." Waldeck spoke around the cigar he held between his teeth, trying to draw up a light.

"We adored her," said Stefan, shaking his head slowly at the wonder of it.

"So you too, Stefan, you too?" said Eileen with a laugh.

"Oh, none of us was in love with Carlitta. Only Klaus, and he was too stupid. He doesn't count. We only adored.

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We knew it was useless to fall in love with her. Neither she nor we believed any one of us was good enough for her."

"So you don't think she's in New York?" asked Waldeck.

Stefan shook his head. "I did hear, from someone who knew her sister, that she had married an American and gone to live in Ohio." He stopped and chuckled congestedly. "Carlitta in Ohio. I don't believe it... Well, we should move along from here now, you know. Sure there isn't *anywhere* you'd like to go before bedtime?"

The girl from South Africa remembered that one of the things she'd always wanted to do if ever she came to New York was to hear a really fat Negro woman singing torch songs, so Stefan took them to a place where the air-conditioning apparatus kept the fog of smoke and perfume and liquor fumes moving around the tables while an enormous yellow blubber of a woman accompanied her own voice, quakingly with her flesh and thunderously on the piano.

IT was only two nights later that Eileen came out of the ladies' room to join her husband in a theater foyer during the interval and found him embracing a woman in a brown coat. As Waldeck held the woman away from him, by her shoulders, as if to take a good look at her after he had kissed her, Eileen saw a small face with a wide grin and really enormous eyes. As Eileen approached she noticed a tall, sandy-haired man standing by indulgently. When she reached the three, Waldeck turned to her with the pent-up, excited air he always had when he had secretly bought her a present, and he held out his hand to draw her into the company. In the moment before he spoke, Eileen felt a stir of recognition at the sight of the woman's hair, smooth brown hair in which here and there a gray filament of a coarser texture showed, refusing to conform to the classic style, center-parted and drawn back in a bun, in which the hair was worn.

"Do you know who this is?" said Waldeck almost weakly. "It's Carlitta."

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Eileen was entitled to a second or two in which to be taken aback, to be speechless in the face of coincidence. In that moment, however, the coincidence did not even occur to her; she simply took in, in an intense perception outside of time, the woman before her—the brown coat open to show the collar of some nondescript silk caught together with a little brooch around the prominent tendons of the thin, creased neck; the flat, taut chest; the dowdy shoes with brown, punched-leather bows coming too high on the instep of what might have been elegant feet. And the head. Oh, that was the head she had seen before, all right; that was the head that, hair so sleek it looked like a satin turban, inclined with a mixture of coquetry, invitation, amusement, and disdain toward a ridiculously long cigarette holder. That hair was brown, after all, and not the Spanish black of the photographs and imagination. And the face. Well, there is a stage in a woman's life when her face gets too thin or too fat. This face had reached that stage and become too thin. It was a prettily enough shaped face, with a drab, faded skin, as if it was exposed to but no longer joyously took color from the sun. Toward the back of the jawline, near the ears, the skin sagged sallowly. Under the rather thick, attractive brows the twin caves of the eyes were finely puckered and mauvish. In this faded, fading face (it was like an old painting of which you are conscious that it is being faded away by the very light by which you are enabled to look at it) the eyes had lost nothing; they shone on, greedily and tremendous, just as they had always been, in the snow, reflecting the Neckar, watching the smoke unfurl to the music of the guitar. They were round eyes with scarely any white to them, like the beautiful eyes of Negro children, and the lashes, lower as well as upper, were black and thick. Their assertion in that face was rather awful.

The woman who Waldeck said was Carlitta took Eileen's hand. "Isn't it fantastic? We're only up from Ohio this morning," she said, smiling broadly. Her teeth were small. childisly square and still good. On her neglected face the lipstick was obviously a last-minute adornment.

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"And this is Edgar," Waldeck was saying, "Edgar Hicks. Carlitta's husband."

The tall, sandy-haired man shook Eileen's hand with as much flourish as a stage comedian. "Glad to know you," he said. Eileen saw that he wore sexagonal rimless glasses and a clip across his tie spelled in pinkish synthetic gold "E.J.H.".

"Carlitta Hicks." Waldeck put out a hand and squeezed Carlitta's elbow. "I can't believe it."

"Sure is extraordinary," said Mr. Hicks. "Carlitta here and I haven't been up to New York for more than three years."

"Ach, no, darling," said Carlitta, frowning and smiling quickly. She used her face so much, no wonder she had worn it out. "Four at least. You remember, that last time was at Christmas." She added to Waldeck, "Once in a blue moon is enough for me. Our life..." She half-lifted a worn hand, gave a little sudden intake of breath through her fine nostrils, as if to suggest that their life, whatever it was, was such that the pleasures of New York or anywhere else offered no rival enticement. She had still a slight German accent to soften the American pronunciation of her speech.

Everyone was incoherent. Waldeck kept saying excitedly, "I haven't been out of South Africa since I arrived there twenty years ago. I'm in New York two days and I find Carlitta!"

There was time only to exchange the names of hotels and to promise to telephone tomorrow. Then the theater bell interrupted. As they parted, Waldeck called back, "Keep Sunday lunch free. Stefan's coming. We'll all be together..."

Carlitta's mouth pursed; her eyes opened wide in a pantomine "Lovely" across the crowd.

"And yet I'm not really entirely surprised," Waldeck whispered to his wife in the darkening theater. "It's been happening to us in one way or another all the time. What do you think of the husband? What about Mr. Edgar Hicks from Ohio?" he added with a nudge.

In the dark, as the curtain rose, Eileen followed it with her eyes for a moment and then said, "I shouldn't have known her. I don't think I should ever have known her."

"But Carlitta hasn't changed at all!" said Waldeck.

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WALDECK was on the telephone, talking to Stefan, immediately after breakfast next morning. Passing to and fro between the bedroom and the bathroom, Eileen could see him, his body hitched up onto the corner of the small desk, smiling excitedly at what must have been Stefan's quiet incredulity. "But I tell you he actually is some sort of farmer in Ohio. Yes. Well, that's what I wanted to know. I can't really say—very tall and fairish and thin. Very American... Well, you know what I mean—a certain type of American, then. Slow, drawling way of speaking. Shakes your hand a long time. A week-end farmer, really. He's got some job with a firm that makes agricultural implements, in the nearby town. She said she runs pigs and chickens. Can you believe it? So is it all right about Sunday? I can imagine you are... *Ach*, the same old Carlitta."

Sunday was a clear, sharp spring day in New York, exactly the temperature and brightness of a winter day in Johannesburg. Stefan rang up to say he would call for the Brands at about eleven, so that they could drive around a little before meeting Carlitta and her husband for luncheon.

"Will it be all right if I wear slacks?" asked Eileen. She always wore slacks on Sundays in Johannesburg.

"Certainly not," said Stefan gravely. "You cannot lunch in a restaurant in New York in slacks."

Eileen put on a suit she had bought in London. She was filled with a childlike love and respect for Stefan; she would not have done the smallest thing to displease him, or to prejudice his opinion of her. When he arrived to fetch the Brands he said, equally gravely, "You look very well in that suit," and led them to his car, where his wife, whom they had met in the course of the week, sat waiting.

His wife was perhaps an odd choice for Stefan, and then again perhaps she was not; she went along with the presidency, the wealth and the Fifth Avenue apartment, and left his inner balance unchanged. She was not so young as Eileen, but young, and a beauty. An American beauty, probably of Swedish or Norwegian stock. Hers was the style of blond beauty in which the face is darker than the hair, which was

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not dyed but real. It was clean and shiny and almost silvery-fair, and she wore it as such women do, straight and loose. She wore black, and when she stood up you noticed that hers was the kind of tall figure that, although the shoulders are broad and the breast full, tapers to too narrow hips and too thin legs. Her eyes were green and brilliant, and crinkled up, friendly, and on the wrist of one beautiful ungloved hand she wore a magnificent broad antique bracelet of emeralds and diamonds. Otherwise she was unadorned, without even a wedding ring. As she shifted along the seat of the car, a pleasant fragrance stirred from her, the sort of fragrance the expensive Fifth Avenue stores were then releasing into the foyers of their shops, to convince their customers of the arrival of the time to buy spring clothes. When she smiled and spoke, in a soft American voice without much to say, her teeth showed fresh as the milk teeth of a child.

Eileen thought how different were this woman and herself (with her large, Colonial, blue-eyed, suburban prettiness) from the sort of girls with whom Waldeck and Stefan had belonged in the world that was lost to them—girls of the Twenties, restlessly independent, sensual and intellectual, citizens of the world with dramatic faces, girls such as Carlitta, inclining her dark Oriental head, had been.

The four drove through Central Park, rather threadbare after the snow and before the blossom. Then they went down to the East River, where the bridges hung like rainbows, glittering, soaring, rejoicing the heart in the sky above the water, where men have always expected to find their visions. They stopped the car at the United Nations building, and first walked along on the opposite side of the road, alongside the shabby, seedy shops, the better to see the great molten-looking façade of glass, like a river flowing upward, on the administrative block. The glass calmly reflected the skyline, as a river reflects, murky green and metallic, the reeds. Then they crossed the road and wandered about a bit along the line of flagstaffs, with the building hanging above them. The Brands resolved to come back again another day and see the interior.

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"So far, there's nothing to beat your bridges," said Eileen. "Nothing."

They drove now uptown to an elegant, half-empty restaurant which had about it the air of recovering from Saturday night. There they sat drinking whisky while they waited.

"I don't know what we can do with the husband," said Waldeck, shrugging and giggling.

"That's all right," said Stefan. "Alice will talk to him. Alice can get along with anybody." His wife laughed good-naturedly.

"You know, he's *worthy*..." said Waldeck.

"I know," said Stefan, comforting.

"Same old Carlitta, though," said Waldeck, smiling reminiscently. "You'll see."

His wife Eileen looked at him. "Oh, she's not," she said, distressed. "She's not. Oh, how can you say that to Stefan?" The girl from South Africa looked at the two men and the woman who sat with her, and around the paneled and flower-decorated room, and suddenly she felt a very long way from home.

Just at that moment, Carlitta and Mr. Edgar Hicks came across the room toward them. Stefan got up and went forward with palms upturned to meet them; Waldeck rose from his seat; a confusion of greetings and introductions followed. Stefan kissed Carlitta on both cheeks gently. Edgar Hicks pumped his hand. In Edgar Hicks' other hand was the Palm Beach panama with the paisley band which he had removed from his head as he entered. The hovering attendant took it from him, and took Carlitta's brown coat.

Carlitta wore the niggly-patterned silk dress that had shown its collar under the coat the night at the theater, the same shoes, the same cracked beige kid gloves. But above the bun and level with the faded hairline, she had on what was obviously a brand-new hat, a hat bought from one of the thousands of "spring" hats displayed that week before Easter, a perky, mass-produced American hat of the kind which makes an American middle-class woman recognizable anywhere in the

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world. Its newness, its frivolous sense of its own ephemerality (it was so much in fashion that it would be old-fashioned once Easter was over) positively jeered at everything else Carlitta wore. Whether it was because she fancied the sun still painted her face the extraordinary rich glow that showed against the snow in the picture of herself laughing in Austria years ago, or whether there was some other reason, her face was again without make-up except for a rub of lipstick. Under the mixture of artificial light and daylight, faint darkening blotches, not freckles but something more akin to those liver marks elderly people get on the backs of their hands, showed on her temples and her jawline. But her eyes, of course, her eyes were large, dark, quick.

She and her husband consulted together over what they should eat, he suggesting slowly, she deciding quickly, and from then on she never stopped talking. She talked chiefly to her two friends Waldeck and Stefan, who sat on either side of her. Edgar Hicks, after a few trying minutes with Eileen, who found it difficult to respond to any of his conversational gambits, discovered that Alice Raines rode horses, and, like a swamp sucking in fast all around its victim, involved her in a long, one-sided argument about the merits of two different types of saddle. Edgar preferred the one type, and simply assumed that Alice must be equally adamant about the superiority of the other. Although his voice was slow, it was unceasing and steady, almost impossible to interrupt.

Eileen did not mind the fact that she was not engaged in conversation. She was free to listen to and to watch Carlitta with Stefan and Waldeck. And now and then Carlitta, forking up her coleslaw as expertly as any born American, looked over to Eileen with a remark or query—"That's what *I* say, anyway" or "Wouldn't you think so?" Carlitta first told briefly about her stay in London when she left Germany, then about her coming to the United States, and her short time in New York. "In the beginning, we stayed in that hotel near Grand Central. We behaved like tourists, not like people who have come to stay. We used to go to Coney Island and

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rowing on the lake in Central Park, and walking up and down Fifth Avenue—just as if we were going to go back to Germany in a few weeks."

"Who's we?" asked Stefan. "Your sister?"

"No, my sister was living in a small apartment near the river. Klaus," she said, shrugging her worn shoulders with the careless, culpable gesture of an adolescent. Stefan nodded his head in confirmation toward Waldeck; of course, he remembered, Klaus had followed her or come with her to America. Poor Klaus.

"What happened to him?" asked Stefan.

"I don't know" she said. "He went to Mexico."

Her audience of three could guess very well how it had been. When she had tired of Coney Island and the outside of Fifth Avenue shops and the rowing in Central Park, Klaus had found out once again that in the new world, as in the old, he had nothing more than amusement value for her.

"After three months"—Carlitta had not paused in her narrative—"I went to stay with my sister and brother-in-law—she had been here some years already. But he got a job with a real-estate scheme, and they went to live on one of the firm's housing projects—you know, a little house, another little house next door, a swing for the kids, the same swing next door. I came back to New York on my own and I found a place in Greenwich Village."

Ah, now, there was a setting in which one could imagine the Carlitta of the photographs, the beautiful, Oriental-looking German girl from Heidelberg, with the bold, promising eyes. And at the moment at which Eileen thought this, her ear caught the drawl of Edgar Hicks. "...now, our boy's the real independent type. Now, only the other day..." Edgar Hicks! Where had Edgar Hicks come in? She looked at him, carefully separating the flesh from the fine fringe of bone in his boiled trout, the knife held deliberately in his freckled hand.

"Did you live in Greenwich Village?" Eileen said to him suddenly.

He interrupted his description of his boy's seat in the

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saddle to turn and say, surprised, "No, ma'am, I certainly didn't. I've never spent more than two consecutive weeks in New York in my life." He thought Eileen's question merely a piece of tourist curiosity, and returned to Alice Raines, his boy, and the saddle.

Carlitta had digressed into some reminiscence about Heidelberg days, but when she paused, laughing from Stefan to Waldeck with a faltering coquettishness that rose in her like a half-forgotten mannerism, Eileen said, "Where did you and your husband meet?"

"In a train," Carlitta said loudly and smiled, directed at her husband.

He took it up across the table. "Baltimore and Ohio line," he said, well rehearsed. There was the feeling that all the few things he had to say had been slowly thought out and slowly spoken many times before. "I was sittin' in the diner havin' a beer with my dinner, and in comes this little person looking mighty proud and cute as you can make 'em..." So it went on, the usual story, and Edgar Hicks spared them no detail of the romantic convention. "Took Carlitta down to see my folks the following month and we were married two weeks after that," he concluded at last. He had expected to marry one of the local girls he'd been to school with; it was clear that Carlitta was the one and the ever-present adventure of his life. Now they had a boy who rode as naturally as an Indian and didn't watch television; he liked to raise his own chickens and have independent pocket money from the sale of eggs.

"Carlitta," Stefan said, aside, "How long were you in Greenwich Village?"

"Four years," she said shortly, replying from some other part of her mind; her attention and animation were given to the comments with which she amplified her husband's description of their child's remarkable knowledge of country lore, his superiority over town-bred children.

Eileen overheard the low, flat reply. Four years! Four years about which Carlitta had said not a word, four years which somehow or other had brought her from the arrogant,

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beautiful, "advanced" girl with whom Waldeck and Stefan could not fall in love because they and she agreed they were not good enough for her, to the girl who would accept Edgar Hicks a few weeks after a meeting on a train.

Carlitta felt the gaze of the girl from South Africa. A small patch of bright color appeared on each of Carlitta's thin cheekbones. Perhaps it was the wine. Perhaps it was the wine, too, that made her voice rise, so that she began to talk of her life on the Ohio farm with a zest and insistence which made the whole table her audience. She told how she never went to town unless she had to; *never* more than once a month. How country people, like herself, discovered a new rhythm of life, something people who lived in towns had forgotten. How country people slept differently, tasted their food differently, had no nerves. "I haven't a nerve in my body, any more. Absolutely placed," she said, her sharp little gestures, her black eyes in the pinched face challenging a denial. "Nothing ever happens but a change of season," she said arrogantly to people for whom there were stock-market crashes, traffic jams, crowded exhibitions and cocktail parties. "Birth and growth among the animals and the plants. Life. Not a cement subsitute." No one defended the city, but she went on as if someone had. "I live as instinctively as one of our own animals. So does my child. I mean, for one thing, we don't have to worry about clothes."

Eileen said rather foolishly, as if in reflex, "Stefan said I couldn't wear slacks to a New York restaurant today."

"Stefan was always a snob." Carlitta's little head struck like a snake.

Eileen was taken aback; she laughed nervously, looking very young. Carlitta grinned wickedly under the hat whose straw caught the light concentrically, like a gramophone record. Stefan's wife smiled serenely and politely, as if this were a joke against her husband. She had taken off the jacket of her suit, and beneath it she wore a fine lavender-colored sweater with a low, round neck. She had been resting her firm neck against her left hand, and now she took the hand away; hers was the kind of wonderful blood-mottled fair

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skin that dented white with the slightest pressure, filled up pink again the way the sea seeps up instantly through footprints in wet sand. She looked so healthy, so well cared for that she created a moment of repose around herself; everyone paused, resting his gaze upon her.

Then Carlitta's thin little sunsallow neck twisted restlessly. "I don't know how you stand it," she said. "I don't know how you can live in New York year after year."

"We go away," Stefan said soothingly. "We go to Europe most summers, to Switzerland to my mother, or to Italy. Alice loves Italy."

"Italy," said Carlitta, suddenly turning over a piece of lobster on her plate as if she suspected that there must be something bad beneath it. "Spain."

"You remember how you went off to the Pyrenees?" Waldeck said to her. From his tone it was clear that this was quite a story, if Carlitta cared to tell it.

"You can't imagine how time flies on the farm," said Carlitta. "The years... just go. Sometimes, in summer, I simply walk out of the house and leave my work and go and lie down in the long grass. Then you can hear nothing, nothing at all."

"Maybe the old cow chewing away under the pear tree," said Edgar tenderly. Then with a chuckle that brought a change of tone: "Carlitta takes a big part in community affairs, too, you know. She doesn't tell you that she's on the library committee in town, and last year she was lady president of the Parent-Teacher association. Ran a bazaar, made around three hundred dollars." There was a pause. Nobody spoke. "I'm an Elk myself," he added. "That's why we're going on to Philadelphia Thursday. There's a convention on over there."

Carlitta suddenly put down her fork with a gesture that impatiently terminated any current subject of conversation. (Eileen thought: she must always have managed conversation like that, long ago in smoky, noisy student rooms, jerking the talk determindely the way she wanted it.) Her mind seemed to hark back to the subject of dress. "Last year," she

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said, "we invited some city friends who were passing through town to a supper party. Now it just so happened that that afternoon I could see a storm banking up. I knew that if the storm came in the night, it was good-by to our hay. So I decided to make a hay-making party out of the supper. When those women came with their high-heeled fancy sandals and their gauzy frocks I put pitchforks into their hands and sent them out into the field to help get that hay in under cover. Of course I'd forgotten that they'd be bound to be rigged out in something ridiculous. You should have seen their faces!" Carlitta laughed gleefully. "Should have seen their shoes!"

The young girl from South Africa felt suddenly angry. Amid the laughter, she said quietly, "I think it was an awful thing to do. If I'd been a guest, I should flatly have refused."

"Eileen!" said Waldeck mildly. But Carlitta pointedly excluded from her notice the girl from South Africa, whom Waldeck was apparently dragging around the world and giving a good time. Carlitta was sitting stiffly, her thin hands caught together, and she never took her eyes off Alice Raines's luxuriantly fleshed neck, as if it were some object of curiosity, quite independent of a human whole.

"If only they'd seen how idiotic they looked, stumbling about," she said fiercely. Her eyes were extraordinarily dark, brimming with brightness. If her expression had not been one of malicious glee, Eileen would have said that there were tears in them.

AFTER lunch, the Brands and the Raineses parted from the Hickses. Carlitta left the restaurant with Waldeck and Stefan on either arm, and that way she walked with them to the taxi stand at the end of the block, turning her small head from one to the other, tiny between them. "I just couldn't keep her away from her two boy friends today," Edgar said indulgently, walking behind with Eileen and Alice. At this point the thin, middle-aged woman between the two men dropped their arms, bowed down, apparently with laughter at some joke, in the extravagant fashion of a young girl, and then caught them to her again.

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Edgar and Carlitta got into a taxi, and the others went in Stefan's car back to his apartment. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, but Stefan brought in a bottle of champagne. The weak sunlight coming in the windows matched the wine. "Carlitta," said Stefan before he drank. "Still 'terrific.' Beautiful." Eileen Brand, sitting on a yellow sofa, felt vaguely unhappy, as if she had wandered into the wrong room, the wrong year. She even shook her head sadly, so slowly that no one noticed.

"I told you, same old Carlitta," said Waldeck. There was a silence. "And that husband," Waldeck went on. "The life they lead. So unlike Carlitta."

"And because of that, so like her," said Stefan. "She always chose the perverse, the impossible. She obviously adores him. Just like Carlitta."

Eileen Brand wanted to stand up and beg of the two men, for their own sake—no, to save her, Eileen, from shame (oh, how could she know her reasons!)—*see* she is changed; see Carlitta is old, faded, exists, as Carlitta, no more!

She had stood up without knowing it. "What's the matter, Eileen?" Waldeck looked up. As she opened her mouth to tell him, to tell them both, a strange thing happened. It seemed that her whole mind turned over and showed her the truth. And the truth was much worse than what she had wanted to tell them. For they were right. Carlitta had not changed. They were right, but not in the way they thought. Carlitta had not changed *at all*, and that was why there was a sense of horror about meeting her; that was why she was totally unlike any one of the other friends they had met. Under that faded face, in that worn body, was the little German girl of the Twenties, arrogant in a youth that did not exist, confidently disdainful in the possession of a beauty that was no longer there.

And what did *she* think of Ohio? Of good Edgar Hicks? Even of the boy who raised chickens and didn't look at television?

"Nothing," said Eileen. "I'd like a little more wine."

It so happened that a day or two later, Stefan's business took

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him to Philadelphia. "Don't forget Carlitta and her husband are staying at the Grand Park," Waldeck said.

"Oh, I'll find them," said Stefan.

But when he came back to New York and dined with his wife, Waldeck and Eileen the same night, he seemed entirely to have forgotten his expressed intention. "I had a hell of a job dodging that Edgar Hicks," he said, by the way. "Wherever I went I seemed to bump into that Elk convention. They were everywhere. Everytime I saw a panama hat with a paisley band I had to double on my tracks and go the other way. Once he nearly saw me. I just managed to squeeze into an elevator in time."

And they all laughed, as if they had just managed it, too.

EXPLICATION

Cold fog hovers in the coastal highlands
Mixed with lingering rain. The inert stream
Quickens: water fingers the creekbed sands,
Deepening the pools and smooth shoals between.

Where the creekmouth spreads upon the sandbar
Waters mix and the seaward salmon wait.
Through the sluice, thick fins glide. Dark angular
Shadows, each turning in the plunging strait,

A hived consort of quickening arrows.
Through pine-vizored precincts the high run mounts,
Leaping the cataract, spanning narrows,
Pure force and motion.

At the highest founts
And junctures salmon swarm. In the actual
Sunlight of objectivity the free
Tactile water flowing and the factual
Fishes give motion to the pure idea.

—ROBERT GREENWOOD

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TWO POEMS BY RICHARD HOWARD

L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE

Wandering with you the shore
Which parallels our river
  Like a second thought,
Singular and sad I wore
The habit of a lover
  Almost inside out.

Night in its black behaving
Muffled every lamp and dyed
  The wooly season,
Pig-iron boats were leaving
For the lake, slowly the loud
  Bridges had risen:

A landscape for the lonely
Or the lewd, as you observed,
  When of a sudden
Something steep and with only
Momentary warning moved
  Out of the hidden

Harbor. It was a dark boat
And *Cytherea* it said
  Low on the long bow.
"A cabin for two" cried out
A voice, and I saw a head
  That I thought I knew—

'Fifteen days to the Island:
We sail tonight with the tide!"
  I remember now,
Turning, how your face went blind.
The river knocked in its bed
  And although a few

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Gulls were loud in their abuse
You did not once look up. When
  To their obloquy
No protest was made, I chose
To learn what I've always known:
  We shall never go.

ON TOUR

It is the movement that disturbs the line,
  Thickening the form,
  Turning into warm
Compression what had once been cold and fine.

Seen from down here, if only we remained,
  These hills are high:
  Driving on, the sky
Imposes, and no longer can be trained

By any structure of the seeming ground.
  Landscape, I discover,
  As the car gains over
Something that changes from a little mound

To monstrous eminence before you eyes,
  Landscape can flaunt, can
  Fail like the heart of man:
And when you see the difference in size

Of cliffs we once considered at the bright
  Grass along their peak
  And then saw from the bleak
Extremity of sand below, the sight

Gives more than pause—alas, it gives the slow
  Ruin of our hopes
  Fed upon the slopes
From where we've been to where we want to go.

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IN A COLD CLIMATE

Pastures where the grass round granite grows
and not immoderate greenness gives homage
to the long fight with clutched rock & snowcap

with the sun near & spoondrift in the wind, and cows
licking sunbaked snowsalt crusts on stones,
hooves akimbo under the bright etched map

of tropical isles in the goldribbed sky all summer
bespeak, in the noonheat, the rigour of cold climates,
as fishspine shoals, sunbleached when the tide's out, show

the integrity of bone. Who would encumber
these huckleberryfields' sparse opulence with tropics'
richesse? Wise clouds withhold vermilion snow.

The seals who surface at the cove's mouth
almost serve to humanize the seascape;
or does the unfootprinted pebbly shore

remind the poised osprey and the dun calf
that soft-eyed swimmers wreathed in ripplerobes
may be Poseidon's myrmidons, that here

is present but one representative
alien by birthright's will to those who ply
by fin, pinion, hoof, the unremitting

elements in whose capricious grace they live,
whose almost-mastered impulse is to try
bending to the will's way the living, the unliving?

I invoke the instinctual wisdom of the hawk's wing,
the dumb cow's long-tongued patience, the seals'
handwebbed finesse in motion indivisible

from the cold seas', joyous in their submitting
to the tide's seasons, and turn, leaving my heels'
prints on the shore, visible or invisible.

—DANIEL G. HOFFMAN

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OEDIPUS RECALLS CYTHAERA

(where as an infant he was abandoned to die)

Oie Cythaera—
Land out of which I might never have
Limped into this day which holds me now
Sweet shade
Where I might still lie bound
Who am found
And lost
Still glade
Where I might still lie
Still!

I set my crooked step to be caught
Thrashing in this day's snare
And I would wind me back
My track
But wind me where?
I squint back toward that ghostly time
And nothing shapes upon the noon-blind air of that
Shade where I might still lie bound
Who am found
And lost
Still glade
Where I might still lie
Still.

—BARBARA DEMING

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ANTHONY WHITTIER

GULL POND IS A HALF-MILE WIDE

AFTER an hour's fishing, Reuel had caught two perch and a sunfish and Peter had caught nothing. He complained good-naturedly to Reuel that he, himself, had done all the suffering while Reuel had had all the luck. Peter had gotten a chill in the cool of the late afternoon; he wore only bathing trunks and a sweater.

"Look, I'll clue you," Reuel said. "Worms are the only bait. They don't like those pieces of clam." They had found a box of bait clams in the boat and with them eked out their small supply of worms which Reuel had put in a Band Aid box.

Eventually Reuel was satiated with his catch and Peter became weary of simply sitting, throwing out his line, waiting, watching the end of the baited hook gleam faintly as it descended slowly, to be lost from sight among the weeds on the bottom, then after a few moments, repeating the process in a slightly different direction from the boat. Peter wondered at Reuel. He was so much younger but so self possessed. Yet when Reuel had hooked his fish, Peter had had to take them off the hook for him, feeling very deft and competent as he did so, while Reuel looked away.

They decided to start back, Peter suggesting that he row in order to get warm. His teeth chattering with cold, he hauled in the anchor-line, green and slimy, and put the anchor in the bow, then fitted the oars in the row-locks and began sculling with one oar to turn the bow toward the narrow entrance to the pond, nearly concealed by grasses on the other side.

Many of the ponds on the Cape occur in groups of twos

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and threes and are connected either by natural channels or by artificial sluices. In this way, the alewives make their way from the ocean, back through the streams, and into the ponds where they spawn. The men and young boys wait for them in the moonlight in early May and catch them in nets as they come in silvery crowds, insistently pressing their smooth bodies against the current. It was through such a system of ponds that the two retraced their route. From Perkin's Pond a shallow channel led to Williams' and from Williams' a sluice led to Gull Pond. Gull was the largest of the three, almost round and half a mile in diameter. Its waters were a mineral turquoise blue, which fish did not seem to like and contrasted strongly with the dark tranquil brown of Perkins' Pond, where the fish were.

The outing had been pleasant. Peter was a guest of Reuel's father; Reuel had just come home from school for the summer. They had known each other only a couple of days and Peter respected Reuel's watchful, polite reserve. The idea of being in company with a boy ten years his junior, so mature in some ways, was at once pleasant and unsettling to Peter. He knew from his own recollection that he was being observed, openly and covertly, in the ruthless way of the young, who stand equally ready to admire or scorn. That he should be able to inform the boy and be thought a good fellow by him was seductive to Peter but he felt that he ran an equal chance of "losing face" as when earlier in the day, while fishing on the shore of a pond, before the idea of renting a boat had occurred to them he had made a false step and gone through the floating mat of plant roots from which they were fishing, and sank into the ooze up to his hips. He had cursed cheerfully and maintained an indomitable good nature, despite the fact that he was soaked and covered with all sorts of vegetable slime and mud, and made clear that it was all part of the game. Nevertheless, Reuel had grinned, his face averted, refusing to share the acknowledgment of Peter's ridiculous appearance.

Peter rowed with long, strong strokes—the technique he had learned in sculling at college but which was ill-suited to

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this rowboat with its too light oars. From time to time, an oar would jump out of the oar-lock and the boat would veer around to one side. Peter nosed the boat into the channel and as the bow parted the grass, Reuel jumped out and pulled while Peter stood up and pushed the boat, digging an oar into the sand. Once out of the sheltered pond where they had fished, they encountered the breeze, now behind them, which had slowed them down on the way in. Even with the exertion of rowing Peter shivered as the breeze was strong enough to make the water choppy.

Entering the shallow, plank-walled sluice, they propelled the boat by reaching out on either side and grasping the posts which held the planks in place. By pulling the boat along in this manner they negotiated the sluice and passed into Gull Pond, across which they could see the gray shingled cottage of Old Man Eaton, his boats pulled up on the beach back of the house.

Occasionally Reuel, who was sitting in the stern, would guide Peter by saying, "A little to the right,—left oar—", and Peter would crane his neck to see for himself, then set himself once more to long, regular strokes, trying to make each one count, setting his feet hard against the bottom of the boat. He was tired and cold and wanted to make the half-mile across the pond pass as quickly as possible. He was thankful for the breeze which pushed them along in the direction they were headed. Only when an oar would come out of the lock was their progress interrupted. Then the boat would swing around, Peter would fit the oar back in place, cursing Old Man Eaton for his light oars, then with many short hard digs with the oar would put the boat back on course and begin the routine of rowing again.

It was around seven in the evening and the mid-June sun hung on the top of a low lying cloudbank which was beginning to redden with the sunset. Orange light filtered through and backlighted the pines in the direction of the sun and tinged the dark green of the trees on the opposite side with an orange cast. But in the eastern sky, it could have been morning. The sky itself was a light leaden blue, the

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summer clouds seemed unconnected with the fading day, lighted as they were by the sun but high enough so that their height at the end of the day was further off. Under the sky, the only color uneffected by the sun was the mineral blue of the water which seemed faintly evil to Peter as it struck in little wind-blown waves against the boat. It occurred to him that it was the same shade as the water in quarries, of uniform blue, blank and hard, concealing unknowable deepness.

Peter followed one stroke with another. They were half way across the pond. Suddenly in the midst of a stroke, his braced feet slipped on the sandy bottom of the boat and overbalanced by the exertion of the stroke he fell over flat on his back in the bottom of the boat, laughing, half in embarrassment and half at his ludicrous action. He lay there, weak with cold and the surprise of his fall. He noticed that one of the oars had come of out the lock and was floating in the blue water, the boat drifting away from it. Still laughing, for it seemed very amusing to him he said to Reuel, "Look, I lost an oar!"

Reuel looked at him without much expression on his face and said, "Yeah, you lost both of them."

Peter clambered up, the amusement gone from his face. He felt a seriousness to the situation, a helplessness, that he could not comprehend. He and Reuel watched the distance between the boat and oars gradually widen. They looked at each other. Peter still had formed no opinion of what should be done. Reuel said, "Say, how about you going over for them. You've got trunks on or I would, honest."

"Oh, that's O. K." Peter accepted Reuel's solution to the problem almost gratefully and began removing his sweater and sneakers. Then he stepped up on the stern of the boat and looked at the water a moment. Its pale blue-green unconcern began to fill him with apprehension but before he let this feeling grow stronger, he dove off the end of the boat. The water felt luke-warm to his body. He had an impression of carrying quantities of gray air into the water with him as his shallow dive interrupted the pattern of the surface and his brief momentum seemed to procede through intermingling

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patches of air and water. Then he began swimming on his side, his face out of the water but his body completely enfolded by it. He soon came to one oar and then to the other. They were as light as sticks and he grasped the ends of both in one hand and side-stroked, using his lower arm to swim with. He had learned this in the Navy, holding a dummy rifle aloft with one hand sometimes since then he had swum with one arm held straight up in the air to make himself feel more versatile and independent in the water. He looked for the boat. It was drifting further away from him and he saw Reuel standing up watching him. He swam a few more strokes and then realized with terror that he was tired. He trod water and brought the ears in close to his chest, grasped them in the middle and tested their buoyancy. They yielded beneath his pressure and would give him no support. He felt betrayed. Inadequate in the boat, the oars were useless to him now. Reual called out to ask him how he was doing. Peter swam and said nothing. Suddenly he shouted, "Come and help me!"

Reuel began taking off his sweater and Peter tried to swim with the oars. He made the motions of swimming but he seemed to stay in the same place. Suddenly he felt as if he were going to sink and water got in his face.

"Hurry!" he shouted and he could see Reuel standing on one foot, the other leg bent up as he took off a shoe. He seemed to be doing this very deliberately and Peter thought of swimming instructors in the Navy who would appear very unconcerned when some of the men thought they were drowning and would let them flounder around by themselves in order to develop their self-confidence, but actually watching very closely lest the man really be in trouble.

"Damn him!" Peter thought, "He thinks I'm faking!" But the thought that Reuel was undressing leisurely in order to test him made him calm and he began to swim more steadily. He saw Reuel dive into the water with his corduroy trousers still on and the self-confidence that this implied to him made him feel better.

But by the time Reuel swam up to him he knew he was

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tired again and abandoned the oars. Reuel swam beside him, trailing the oars from one hand. Then he said, "Here, you take one, this is the first time I've been in this year."

Peter could see that Reuel was a better swimmer but he took one of the oars. Reuel said, "We'll never make the boat now. It's drifting faster than we can swim." Peter said, forget the oars—let's just get to shore."

Reuel began to move away from Peter toward the shore. He was a much better swimmer. Peter's arms and legs felt heavy and stiff. His movements now were only the suggestion of a sidestroke.

The breeze which had died down as if to observe the incident now seemed to feel that the action had grown too static and came up again, blowing little waves against Peter's face. He gasped and drew in water. Although his head was completely above the surface he felt submerged. He shouted to Reuel, "Save me!" but he knew that Reuel was too far away now and he heard Reuel's voice across the water: "I can't help you!"—and something more which he could not hear. He knew he was going to sink. He was indignant at the thought of drowning. He could not! But then he knew that he could and he could see his own body way below the surface of the blue water, completely still except as the currents moved it. And he thought of how many people had lived to grow old and how many had become great and never had been helpless like this and who had never been put at such a disadvantage by Nature in their whole lives. He realized what a crafty game it was to avoid such terrible consequences so innocently come by. And then he sank. He didn't know how deep it was but he felt himself going down. It was just a matter of going down—but he had no air and he had to get up again. He thrashed frantically with his arms and legs. He had gone way under and all his thrashing barely got his mouth out of water when he knew it should have sent him head and shoulders above the surface. But he got a mouthful of air and he held onto it as he felt himself going down again, but he held onto the mouthful of air and began making swimming motions and gradually he came to the

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surface. He took in air only a mouthful at a time and would hold onto that mouthful until the time came to take another. Then he heard Reuel shouting, "Help!" and he knew it was for him and he saw the shore, the few houses around the edge of the pond and he knew that it would never occur to anyone to look out at the pond because everything was so quiet and no one could imagine what was happening to him.

He thought perhaps he could float and rest but when he half-turned to get on his back, he felt as if he were on the top of a long incline and would slide all the way to the bottom so he returned to making short, feeble strokes and he looked at the shore and wondered how he could ever swim that far. Then he looked up at the sky and he saw the clouds, and he thought, "How serene they are! How can such a difference exist between their serenity and my desperation? Only a God could account for such unlikeness. God, give me serenity!" And he stared up at the clouds as he swam, fastening his eyes on them. He held onto each miserly breath and when the thought came that it was impossible for him to swim any more, he kept moving his arms and legs in the same way. Even breathing became such a conscious and exhausting effort that he restricted each exhalation in a sort of groan, using his larynx as a gate through which each breath was reluctantly passed.

He thought of nothing but a breath in, a breath out, and swimming, swimming, never thinking of when he could stop, feeling himself pressed between air and water with the air a weight on him and the water making room for him below. He dared not think of the time when he would put his feet down and find something to rest on, something on which all his tired muscles could depend and not have to move at all.

Then he turned his face and he saw Reuel standing on the shore, only a little way away, looking at him calmly, standing with his hair plastered down and his dark blue corduroys clinging wetly to his legs. Peter swam five or six strokes more and then put his feet down. He felt sand under his feet and he stopped swimming. He stood on his feet and the

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water only came a little above his knees. He could not stand erect but walked, his body falling into each step, to the yard-wide beach. His breath came out in groans. He stood, his hands on his knees, and his stomach contracted in horror and relief and he retched, looking down at the dry grass, but his stomach was empty and nothing came. He trembled and shivered and his breath continued to come out in groans as he walked, bent over, and then he retched again. Reuel walked slowly behind him as they came to the boat which had drifted in ahead of them. Reuel stooped to catch the bow of the boat and pulled it up on the beach and threw the anchor into the bushes. Peter got his sweater and struggled into it. He stood, shivering and groaning, while Reuel got the fishing tackle from the boat. Reuel said, "Why don't you quit that noise. I'm cold too." Peter looked at him and they both walked toward the car. Peter didn't care what Reuel thought because now he knew what a man should fear....

ANNUNCIATION

Nobody blamed her. When a god comes down
What can a poor girl do—for who can block
His will? She never had a chance to think—
Knocked senseless by that enervating shock
Of lightning, she woke crying on the ground;
And then it was so simple and so clear...
She felt a blossom crushing underneath
Her body, warm juice running, and no fear.

A golden swarm of suns swam in his eyes
And all the sky was covered by this head—
And she, delirious; well, you know the rest.
The cataclysm left her nearly dead...
Then nothing! only desert, bitter sand,
Her belly buckled—she still felt his weight.
But where was he? She looked up at the sky.
He left her as a god does: full of fate.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Fiction

NADINE GORDIMER *(Face From Atlantis)* was born in South Africa in 1923. Simon and Schuster has published a volume of her short stories, *Soft Voice of the Serpent*, a novel, *The Lying Days*, and this fall will publish a second book of short stories, *Six Feet of the Country*, in which *Face From Atlantis* appears.

ANTHONY WHITTIER *(Gull Pond Is a Half-Mile Wide)* was born in Maine, educated at Tufts College and the Sorbonne, and lives in Connecticut. This is his first published work.

WILLIAM YATES *(A Wrestler With Sharks)* studied creative writing at Columbia and worked on New York newspapers and in the publicity business. He now lives and writes in Ridgefield, Conn.

Interview

MARION CAPRON, a member of the editorial staff of this magazine, also works for the Public Relations Office of Barnard College in New York City.

Chronicles

JAMES BLAKE *(Letters From an American Prisoner)* sums up his life as follows: "Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and came to the United States at the age of ten. Prepared from childhood for a concert pianist's career, but fell afoul of, and in love with jazz music in college (U. of Illinois and Northwestern). Decided that playing jazz piano was a pleasant way of making a living, and have been at it on and off ever since." He recently was released from a second prison term. One of his short stories will be published in a coming issue of THE PARIS REVIEW.

JEAN GENET (*From "A Thief's Journal"*) was born in 1910 in France. An illegitimate child, he was abandoned by his mother to the Assistance Publique at an early age. When he was ten he was caught stealing and sent to the first of several reformatories. He ran away while still very young and joined the French Foreign Legion, but quickly deserted. For years he wandered through Europe living by beggary, stealing, smuggling, and prostitution. He served sentences in the prisons of several European countries. In 1942, while in a French prison, he wrote his first book, *Notre Dame des Fleurs*, and in the following five years wrote three more novels, two plays, a volume of poems, and *A Thief's Journal*. His first book since 1948, *Le Balcon*, was recently published in Paris, and will be published in America by Grove Press.

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The *London Times Literary Supplement* wrote of Jean Genet:

"His works are composed of stories of horrifying vulgarity, but these stories are always set in a framework of subtle reflection, which sets their vulgarity to the account of a despairing meditation on the nature of being, of a meditation, that is, on the divine, on sanctity, on sovereign power."

Poetry

NICOLAS L. M. CROME *(The Day the Geese Got Drunk, The Fox Hunt)* is a school teacher, educated at Kenyon College and Temple and Ohio State Universities.

BARBARA DEMING *(Oedipus Recalls Cythaera)* is a graduate of Bennington College. Her work has been published in *Charm*, *Chimera*, and the *New Yorker*.

DAVID FERRY *(On the Way to the Island, The Good Man, Elegiac)* is an Assistant Professor of English at Wellesley College.

ROBERT GREENWOOD (*Explication*) attended the University of Denver and is now a librarian, as well as editor and publisher of *Talisman*.

DANIEL G. HOFFMAN *(In a Cold Climate)* was chosen as the Yale Younger Poet of 1953. He is an instructor of English at Columbia.

RICHARD HOWARD *(On Tour, Invitation au Voyage)*, a graduate of Columbia, lives in New York where he works as an editor of an encyclopedia. His poems have been published in the *Hudson Review* and *Poetry*.

HERBERT MORRIS *(A Discipline of Zenith Deep as Life)* is a Philadelphian. *New World Writing*, *Sewanee Review*, and *Accent*, among other magazines, have used his writing.

RICHARD O'CONNELL *(Annunciation)* served in the Navy for four years and is now attending Temple University.

ROBERT PACK *(An Idyl in Idleness)* is well-known to the readers of American literary magazines. *The Irony of Joy*, his first book of verse, was published last fall by Scribner's.

MARVIN SOLOMON *(Belle Grove)* has appeared in numerous literary reviews and a book, *First Poems*, was published in 1952.

JAMES WRIGHT *(The Assignation)* attended Kenyon College and the University of Vienna. His poems have appeared in *Kenyon Review*, *Sewanee Review*, and *Poetry*. He is 28 years old.

NOTE: The editors regret that Miss Jenny Jones' first name was misspelled "Jinny" in the spring issue of the magazine.

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SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS

A directory to eating, drinking and shopping in Paris

RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND CABARETS

MONTPARNASSE

Restaurants

Club Jean Pierre, 4, rue Antoine Bourdelle, 15e, Lit. 59-92. Recommended by Oxford House. A good spot to eat "after the show." Artistes, music, lively. Not expensive.

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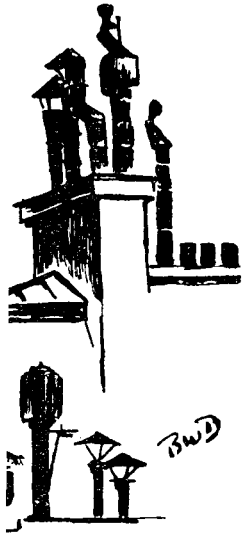
Murat, 60, Blvd. Montparnasse, Lit. 20-60. A good cheerful little eating place, good service... personal attention at moderate prices. Typically French.

De la Bonne Table, 5, rue Sainte-Beuve, Lit. 07–22. Good "family" cooking at very moderate prices. A favorite restaurant of the artists and natives of the quarter.



Doucet, 25, rue d'Assas (3 min. from Gare Montparnasse). A really good "middle tariff" restaurant, midway between Montparnasse and St. Germain. Good food, carefully served.

Le Nègre de Toulouse, 159, Boulevard du Montparnasse. Cooking in the style of the South of France. Moderate prices. Specialty: Cassoulet Toulousian.

Maison Alaux, 106. Blvd. Montparnasse, 14e, Dan. 54–33. Established in 1910. Alaux is famous as the favorite restaurant of Lenin and Trotsky in exile. Moderate prices.

Restaurant Sainte-Beuve, 8, rue Sainte-Beuve. Greek specialities. Moderate prices. English speaking, family cooking. Artists and their friends.

Bars and Cabarets

Le Monocle, 60, Blvd. Edgar-Quinet, Dan. 41–30. Le Cabaret feminin de Paris. Ambiance très originale. Attractions. Danse.

Les Vikings, 29, rue Vavin. Bar-Americain-Brasserie. Open all night. A favorite of Americans in Paris.

Restaurant des Etats-Unis, 135, Blvd. du Montparnasse, Dan. 33–26. Meals served at any hour of the day or night until 2:00 A.M. A really good, typically French "Specialités Michel" Bar.

Patricks, Blvd. Montparnasse. Excellent small restaurant especially known for the best coffee in the Quartier.

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MONTPARNASSE-DENFERT ROCHEREAU

Restaurant du Lion, 11, Place Denfert-Rochereau, 14e, Gob. 41–32. A cheerful eating place 5 minutes from the center of Montparnasse. Good food and pleasant service at reasonable prices. Authentic French "restaurant du quartier".

ST. GERMAIN-DES-PRES

Restaurants

Rotisserie de l'Abbaye, 22, rue Jacob, 6e, Dan. 36–26. One of the best known eating houses in the heart of St. Germain-des-Pres. Medieval atmosphere. Troubadours and minstrels. Fairly expensive. Table reservations.

J. Voisin, 12, Rue Gregoire de Tours, 6e. Ode. 82–87. Cooked foods ready to serve. Cooked food you can order and eat at home. Anything from steaks to mashed potatoes for those who rent rooms without gas.

Calvet, 165, Blvd. St. Germain, Lit. 93–51. Coq en paté... Cassoulet... Canard à l'orange. First class food and service, intimate, rather expensive.

Vagenende, 142, Blvd. St. Germain, 6e, Dan. 68–18, Metro-Odeon. Cuisine Bourgeoise Française. A good quiet restaurant. Satisfying food at very moderate prices.

Fleuve d'Argent, 26, rue St. André des Arts, 6e, Dan. 98–21. Chinese and Italian specialties at moderate prices. A cheerful little restaurant just off the Place Saint-Michel. An ideal spot for dinner before a St. Germain-des-Pres floor show. Open till midnight.

IVe République, 42, rue Jacob, 6e. A gay and promising little restaurant with a real St. Germain-des-Pres flavour. French and Alsatian specialties at moderate prices.

Des Gourmets, 19, rue des Canettes. Excellent and reasonably priced cuisine. Specialties: Coq au vin, Canard aux olives.

Bars and Cabarets

Le Trou Madame, 3, Passage de la Petite Boucherie. "Club Privé" open to all comers, where an advanced Cha-Cha-Cha is

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danced between sessions of the 15th century jeu of "Trou Madame". Near the church of St. Germain-des-Pres and the Place Furstenberg.

Bar St. Thomas d'Aquin, 3, rue du Pre aux Clercs, Bab. 18–60. An intimate little hotel bar open for breakfast, afternoon tea, and drinking until 2 a.m. in stimulating Spanish atmosphere. Not expensive.

Le Tournon, Café-Tabac. A famous literary café, 18, rue de Tournon. Tel. Dan. 16–16.

LATIN QUARTER

Restaurants

La Bouteille d'Or, 9, Quai de Montebello, 5e, Ode. 52–58. A good restaurant opposite Notre Dame. Specialité: "La Frecassee de Poulet comme en Provence". Not expensive.

Le Port du Salut, 163, bis, rue St. Jacques, 5e, Ode. 32–03. A friendly and intimate little restaurant. Provencal specialties at very reasonable prices, typically "Rive gauche" cabaret dancing. Open all night except Monday.

Scandia Club, 35, rue Gay-Lussac, Ode. 99–47. A favorite of old timers of the "Colonie Americaine". Excellent Smorgasbord, music and entertainment till 2 a.m. (Average 1200 frs. or 3 dollars.)

Coq d'Or, 13, rue Malebranche, 5e, Dan. 25–43. Russian and oriental specialties. Slav atmosphere. Good and reasonable.

Bars and Cabarets

Le Mas de la Chèvre d'Or, 14, Blvd. St. Michel, Dan. 98–16. One of the better class bar/restaurants of the quarter, where you can eat or drink until midnight in a richly decorated setting, and listen to George Schmidt at the piano.

Caveau des Oubliettes, rue St. Julien le Pauvre, One of the oldest French cabarets. Famous since 1920 for old traditional French songs. Underneath France's oldest church.

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ETOILE, CHAMPS ELYSEES, AND CONCORDE

Restaurants

La Truite, 30, rue Fauborg St. Honoré, 8e, Anj. 12–86. One of Paris' most distinguished restaurants. Features delicious Norman specialties. On a picturesque court off the Right Bank's chief shopping street. Under the direction of the famous Marcel Dorin.

Chez Francis, Place de l'Alma, Ely. 79–11. A famous cafe and restaurant, rendezvous of leading writers, actors, playwrights. Pleasant view from terrace. Grill room, excellent food, not inexpensive.

Rome, 11, Rue Marbeuf, 8e. Bal 47–98. Italian specialities in an amusing and quiet atmosphere. Medium price.

Le 32 Longchamp, 32, Rue de Longchamp, 16e. Authentic Basque and Spanish cuisine in a charming setting. Close to the Trocadero.

Chez Cyprien, 75, Ave. Kleber, 16e. Pas 37–90. A convenient little restaurant between the Etoile and the Trocadero. Cuisine francaise, specialité Chicken pie. Reasonable prices.

Le Petit Wagram, 45, Ave. Wagram. Eto. 33–39. A good, American style snack-bar, immediate service at all hours, day or night. Two minutes from the Etoile, next door to the Salle Wagram.

Restaurant des Arcades, 61, Rue de Ponthieu, 8e. Ely 52–89. A small restaurant for those who want to eat without spending too much. Probably the lowest prices in the quartier.

Cimarosa, 49, Avenue Kleber, 16e. A good middle tariff restaurant, small and intimate with a pleasant terrace. Five minutes from the Etoile.

Bars

Mars Club, 6, rue Robert Estienne, Ely. 47–99. Open all night for the convenience of those who must sleep days. Entertainment by Art Simmons and Lucretia Dix.

Le Sympa, 25, rue Royale (Cité Berryer) 8e. A pleasant and intimate little bar, two minutes from the Place Concorde.

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PALAIS ROYALE

Restaurants

Chatelet, 6, Rue Saint-Denis, Place du Chatelet. Gut 42–41. A convenient, middle-priced restaurant almost next door to the Theatre du Chatelet. Excellent for meals before the show. The service is good and rapid.

Au Rocher de Cancale, 8, Rue de la Tacherie, 4e. Zrc 92–57. A convenient low-priced restaurant just behind the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. Recommended for good food before the show.

Bars and Cabarets

Milord l'Arsouille, 5, rue de Beaujolais, Palais Royale, Cen. 88–14. Night club. Floor Show. Bar. Attractions in a genuine setting of the French Revolution.

MONTMARTRE

Historial de Montmartre, 11, Passage Trainée, Place du Tertre. "The Madame Tussaud of Montmartre". Unbelievably life-like re-creations in wax, with period costumes and settings, of the great historical events and persons that have rendered "la Butte" famous. 10 A.M. – 7 P.M. English speaking guides.

Matériel pour Artistes, Peintres, *J. Weber*, 12, rue Douai, Tri. 54–85. All supplies, colours, canvas, etc., for painters.

Chez Marianne, 72, boulevard de Clichy, MON 10–81. One of the best old established restaurants in the districts. Decorated by Guy Arnoux in the true Montmartre style. "Croustillon Marianne", "Rognons de Veau flambee". Around $4.

Au Relais Normand, 32, rue d'Orsel, 18e. First class, plentiful cuisine in the best Normand tradition. Old world decor, intimate, with quick service. Moderately priced.

Chez Aglae, 9 bis Rue Pigalle, 9e. A quick-service, low priced restaurant. Italien food served "at the Bar" or in the back parlour up to midnight.

Aux Lilas, 24, Rue Saint-Lazare, 9e. Turkish, Greek and Armenian dishes. A pleasant moderately priced restaurant, a few minutes from Pigalle. Specially recommended: Cous-Cous and Chiche-Kabab.

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Chez Jeanette, 16, Rue Berthe, 18e. A tiny "Montmartais" bar and restaurant where English is really spoken. Italian specialities served till all hours. Gay, unconventional and inexpensive.

Chez Adrienne, 25, Rue la Bruyere, 9e. Low priced little restauone can afford every day. A favorite of local artists and singers. "*Cuisine à beurre.*"

Au Bon Bock, 2, Rue Dancourt. Metro Anvers. A real atmosphere of "le vieux Montmarte". Singing, good food and extremely low prices.

Bolee St Georges, 37, Rue St-Georges. A "self-service" restaurant where you can lunch well in half an hour at half the price. Normal service evenings.

Au Tournant de la Butte, 46, Rue Caulaincourt, 18e. One of the best restaurants of the quartier, and not at all expensive.

Auberge des Ducs de Bourgogne, 2, Square d'Anvers, 9e. An old established tavern 200 yards from Pigalle. Quiet, conservative and first class.

Bars and Cabarets

Les Fleurs, 25, Rue Duranthin. Good small restaurant with a Parisian floor-show, open from 9 p.m. till dawn.

RESTAURANTS DES QUARTIERS DIVERS

La Roseraie, 43, Ave. des Ternes, Eto. 19–28. A good restaurant. French cuisine with Italian specialties. Reasonable prices. Rendezvous for Sallee Pleyel and Wagram.

Pullman Bar, 197, rue de Grenelle, 7e, Inv. 99–77. Five minutes from Eiffel tower. Good food and music till 2 a.m. Specialités Provençales. Your Corsican host: Straboni. Not expensive.

Le Mont-Blanc, 2, Rue Casimir-Perier, 7e. A charming terrace overlooks the square and church St. Clotilde. Provençale specialties, moderately priced.

Le Velay, 26, Rue St. Didier, 16. Basque specialities and special orders promptly executed. All the usual wines.

Le Relais de Chaillot, 1, Rue de Chaillot, 16e. Specialité: "vins d'origine", Bourgogne "blanc et rouge". Service until ten, the minimum 500 to 600 francs.

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SHOPPING IN PARIS

Saint Germain des pres

ANTIQUES, Jean-Marie Beaulu, 169, Blvd. St. Germain, 6e. LIT 46–53. 18th century porcelains and petits-meubles de Paris.

ART MATERIALS, The Paris American Art Co., 2, rue Bonaparte, 6e. Everything for the artist and sculptor, whatever the medium.

CERAMIQUES, Pierre Bedel, 7, Rue des Sts. Peres, 6e. Pierre Bedel is a potter and artisan, who designs and creates traditional and modern French ceramics and pottery in his studio.

REPRODUCTIONS, Breheret & Prat, 9, Quai Malaquais, 6e. Color reproductions of all established painters, old and contemporary. Original water-colors, lithographs and etchings. A very comprehensive stock.

Ecole Militaire

BOOTS, Guilloux-Malfroid, 35, ave. de la Motte Piquet. Riding boots, Jodphur boots, children's boots. Bottier auprès de l'école militaire.

Palais Royal

PERFUMES, For You, 233, rue St. Honoré, 1er. American shopping. Finest perfumes, novelties... objets de fantasie... Members of the The Diners' Club.

BOOKS, Denyse Chertin, 14, Rue Richelieu. Ric 64–18. Near the Palais Royal and the Theatre Français. Old books of the 16th to the 19th century, also bibelots, engravings and pictures.

Quartiers Divers

SHOES, D. Codre, 30, Rue Lauriston, 16e. Master shoe-maker. Ladies and gentlemaen's shoes to measure. Exclusive models, accredited to "Art et Creations".

ANTIQUES, Jadis, 45, Rue de Penthievre, 8e. Metro St. Philippe du Roule. Antiques and ornaments, porcelain and silverwear, of the 18th and 19th centuries.

SHOPPING, L'Ane Bleu, 41, Rue de Penthievre, 5e. An indiscribable little collection of hats and other frivoltiés, even giraffes for the children.

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ANTIQUES, Cadet-Roussel, 96, Rue de Grenelle, 7e. A gallery located in a more residential part of Paris. Antiques, fine prints of the 18th and 19th centuries, and furniture of quality.

FURNITURE, Claude Cueil, 16, Rue St. Simon, 7e. Specializes in 18th century furniture from Louis XIV to Empire. Decoration, antiques and tapistries.

Montmartre

FRIVOLITES, Ma P'tite Folie, 37, Rue Caulaincourt, 18e. Amusing and elegant hats, scarfs, jumpers and sweaters for women.

PAINTINGS, Galerie Raffy, 9, Impasse Traine, which offers each year the "Prix de Montmartre" for painting. Paintings by Massalve, Bardone, Hinsberger, Masson, Tofoli, Ardissone, etc.

Montparnasse

HATS, Colette Duvivier, 92, Bd. du Montparnasse. A wide autumn collection of ladies' hats. Originality and chic.

STATIONERY, Papeterie de Montparnasse, Bd. du Montparnasse, next door to the Cafe Dome. All writing materials, pens, paper, etc. The agents for Waterman and Parker pens.

CRAFTWORK, Seves, 4, Rue Campagne Premiere, 14e. Modern objects and home furnishings, useful and decorative, hand made in forged iron, wood, ceramique, etc. by skilled artist-craftmen of Paris.

Left Bank art galleries

Dina Vierny, 36, rue Jacob, 6e. *Maillol*, sculpture, drawings. "Peintres Ecole de Paris".

Doria, 1, Place Alphonse-Deville, 6e, Lit. 67–17. Exhibitions of contemporary painters. Water colours, etchings, "dry point".

Photographie Giraudon, 9, rue des Beaux Arts, 6e, Dan. 93–83. Offers you complete photo-reproduction service for the arts, history, and archaeology. Our classification system facilitates research, expedites orders. Color transparencies, slides & prints, Ektachrome & Kodachrome.

Galerie de l'Institut, 6, rue de Seine, 6e, Ode. 32–90. Directed by Marise Levesque. Artistes contemporains et antiquités. Important collections.

Mazarine, 34, rue Mazarine, 6e. Contemporary painters of diverse schools, from impressionism to abstract modern.

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NORMANDY · HOTEL DU GOLF · ROYAL CASINO

AUGUST

6 Grand Galas at the Ambassadeurs
Grand Ballet de Marquis De Cuevas

SPORTING EVENTS:

TENNIS (25 Courts)

Tournaments in July and August

YACHTING

Regattas (July and August)

PIGEON SHOOTING

(15 millions francs in prizes)
July 14 to 28

TWO GOLF COURSES

July 26 to 29: International Seniors Cup. Sept. 1 to 4: The Gold Cups

HORSE SHOW

July 14 to 18

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER:

40 DAYS OF RACING ON TWO RACE COURSES

(150.000.000 frs in prizes)
August 19: Prix Morny. August 26: Grand Prix de Deauville.
August 28: Prix Georges Courtois August 30: Prix de la Côte Normande.

POLO

August 26: THE GOLD CUPS (World Open Championship) 20 Goal teams

SALE OF YEARLINGS

August 15 to 28

Chairman, François André

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